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NOVEMBER 1994

**COMIC WORLD
GOES TO THE
MOVIES!**

ISSUE NO **33**

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CONFESSIONS**

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JIM CARREY AND
MARK VERHEIDEN
ON THE SUMMER
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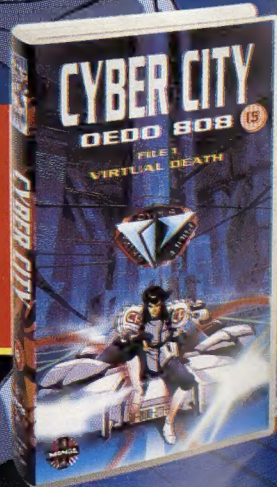


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The latest news from the world of books, graphic novels, films, video and tv

Why am I writing this at 3am on Monday morning? Because, friends, I've just waved Bon Voyage to the fifty or so people still lurking around the bar at the last night of UKCAC party. Like a lot of people I'm suffering from a three-day-old throat strain and for once in my life I've been forced into almost silence. So I've croaked my goodbyes and I don't actually feel that tired. I've just watched a terrible Sybil Danning movie which co-starred Lou Feringo - in German! I couldn't tell you what the title was, having missed the beginning [it was Hercules (Italy, 1983) - late breaking news, Steve], but it has to be one of the worst movies ever made - the special effects crew have to be praised, or shot, for their ingenuity: a sword that was supposed to glow red hot had a light-bulb in the handle. Almost made up for by a duo of oily female wrestlers writhing around one of the cheapest sets I've ever seen, but not quite - even at this time of the morning.

The voice-loss is the reason why I had to call a halt to interviews, so anyone I promised I'd talk to I apologise; I'll be in touch shortly (probably already have by the time you read this).

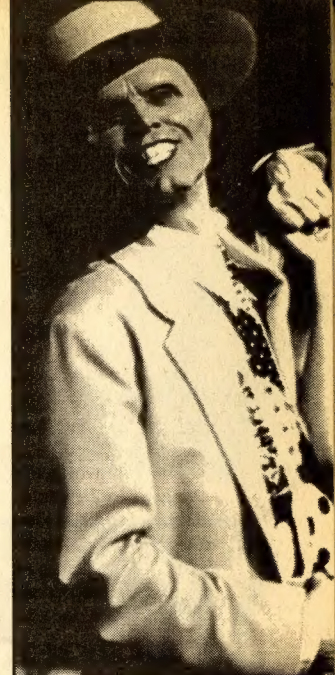
Emma, Kirsty and I were up in the Publisher's Room all weekend, meeting and chatting to people, and all three of us would like to say a big Thank You to everyone who complimented the magazine. From general reaction it looks like you think we're doing the right thing, but that won't stop us trying to improve and evolve.

I don't know the results of our little charity auction (it's late, and people picked tickets at random!), but I can pick out some winners, so the prizes go to David Wood, Diane Ware and Peter Young. Congratulations. As we didn't give any particular first, second, third prize order to the three premium editions we had up for grabs we'll be in touch in that order so you can choose the one you want.

It strikes me that you're thinking 'Well, it's the 21st of October (or later) already, how comes he's still at UKCAC?'. Well, it's because it takes that long to design, lay out pages, produce film, print, collate, fold, staple and distribute a magazine. According to the schedule I'm already running late as my final setting deadline was before the Convention. I mention this because we had people coming up to us at the convention with news of events and signings but which I can't use until the next month's issue which comes out on November 18. So if you have news of Marts or signings, please let us know as early as possible.

Well, that's another UKCAC come and gone. We hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did. Amongst the interviews coming up over the next couple of months will be: John Buscema, Carlos Ezquerro, Kurt Busiek, exclusive insights into the new Batman, some more exclusives on the Dredd movie - and our cover and look at the pre-production sketches are not only exclusive to Comic World but the first officially sanctioned features - plus a whole lot more! Next month we already have interviews with Asterix creator Uderzo and Disney's most famous duck man, Carl Barks, plus Pete Milligan on the new Vertigo Voices line, so we're trying to live up to our reputation of being diverse.

I guess that's it, so until we get to do the timewarp again (!), have a great thirty days. See you then.



Contributors: Steve Cook, Neil Cooper, Tony Earnshaw, Warren Ellis, John Gosling, Richard Hill, Dave McLoughlin, John Mosby, Pete Taylor

Cover: Sylvester Stallone. As Judge Dredd. Wearing the helmet. Absolutely exclusive. 'Nuff said!
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Published by Aceville Publications Ltd, Castle House, 97 High Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1TH.

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spaced, and should be accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. The Publishers reserve the right to amend such submissions. Please note: we receive dozens of unsolicited submissions every month, so don't expect a lengthy reply the following day, nor are we here to write your college thesis for you.

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unsatisfactory transactions. We will, however, immediately investigate any written complaints.

Typesetting and Origination:
Alex Baldock Typesetting and Accent Typographics

Printed by:
Acorn Web Offset Ltd.
Westgate W.Yorks

Newstrade Distribution:
United Magazine Distribution Ltd.
37-45 Paul Street, London EC2A 4BP

Direct Market Distribution:
Titan Distributors Ltd.
PO Box 250, London E3 3LT
Please mention Comic World when replying to any advertisement.

COMIC World NEWS

X-ERO HOUR THE END OF THE X-MEN?

Uncanny X-Men #320 is the launching spot for the biggest X-event since the Dark Phoenix saga - the 'Return of Legion', a four-part prelude to even bigger events in the calendar in the next few months. Legion, the son of Charles Xavier, had for years been in a coma. Now he's back, healed, a mutant of vast, untapped raw power, and determined to make up for his past sins. And it's into the past he heads, to the point where his father, Professor X, founder of the X-Men, met and befriended Eric Magnus Lensherr, Magneto, the most powerful and dangerous mutant of all. Legion plans to make sure that the dream of one man survives, even if he has to murder the other. Those of you who are ****SPOILER**** sensitive, miss out the next three paragraphs.

Wolverine himself will be rejoining the X-Men (in *Wolverine* #90) as the X-Men follow Legion back to the past - but Legion's altering of the past leads into the biggest "What If...?" story Marvel have yet produced...What if Professor X had never founded the X-Men? For in *X-Men: Alpha*, a 48-page one-shot shipping in December, Charles Xavier is killed. The build up to the event is charted in all the X-titles, which for December are all carrying a bound-in Fleer *Ultra X-Men II* trading card, but only in the deluxe editions.

The results will be seen from January when all the X-Men books switch titles: already riding high in the charts with the release of *Generation X* #1 ousting *Spawn* from the poll position of top-seller and the higher priced editions replacing their standard price counterparts in the top ten, the changeover could pull the slightly less successful *Cable* and *Excalibur* back up the charts, and Marvel's hold on the dollar share of the market could leap with their best-selling family of titles featuring nine number ones (...well, eight 1s and a 101).

The schedule sees the regular X-Men title become *Mutants* #1, featuring Magneto and his team,

whilst *Cable* becomes *X-Man* #1 (singular) starring Nathaniel Christopher Summers, an escapee from the clone banks; *Uncanny Mutants* #1 replaces *The Uncanny X-Men* and features Magneto, his wife, Rogue, and their son; Cyclops betrays his father, Mr. Sinister, in *Factor X* #1, replacing *X-Factor*; *X-Posse* #1 replaces *X-Force* where Gambit and Lila Cheney plan to steal the M'Kraan crystal; *X-Calibre* #1 features Nightcrawler and Mystique and their search for Destiny, replacing *Excalibur*; the quarterly *X-Men Unlimited* becomes *X-Men Chronicles* #1 and will tell the story of how Magneto formed the Mutants, and *Weapon X* replaces *Wolverine* with the story of Logan and Jean Grey. Newcomer *Generation X* becomes *New Mutants* #101, picking

up the numbering from the series which became *X-Force* in 1991 and telling the story of how Colossus and his wife, Kitty Pryde, save Colossus' sister from the slave pits.

Expect some or all the titles to revert eventually, but it's a canny move from Marvel who will be left with the option of continuing the titles and considerably increasing the size of the X-Men family of titles in one swift move.

Do you want to star in your own X-Men comic? Marvel are currently offering just that through JDM Fulfillment Company whereby your name, birthdate, best friend and home town can be mentioned in a customised X-Men book in which you appear as Captain Universe.



BATMAN: BRUCE IS BACK! SO'S AZRAEL

Bruce Wayne will be returning to the Batman family of titles along with new artists, a new costume, and a new 4-part crossover storyline, 'The Troika'.

Shipping on December 13, *Batman* #515, Bruce Wayne will be adopting a new look to tackle a group of rogue KGB operatives who plan to take control of Gotham's underworld. The new creative team is Doug Moench, Kelley Jones & John Beatty whose *Batman: Bloodstorm* is released soon; on December 20 *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #35 introduces Barry Kitson & Ray (Adventures of Superman) McCarthy to Alan Grant's continuing story as the battle escalates into a brutal battle with Colonel Vega; no creative changes for *Detective Comics* #682 (still Chuck Dixon, Graham Nolan & Scott Hanna), but a problem for Robin who's being hindered by his father, Jack Drake, when the title ships on

December 27; and Chuck Dixon, Tom Grummett & Ray Kryssing bring the tale to a close on January 3 in *Robin* #14.

All four titles are available in Collector's Editions with multilevel embossed, spot varnished covers, and in their standard formats.

Also on December 20, *Azrael* begins an ongoing monthly run by Dennis O'Neil, Barry Kitson & James Pascoe with Jean Paul Valley a broken man, lost and haunted by his failure and visions of Batman. But life on the grey streets of a city far from Gotham forces his



conditioning to the surface - and Azrael! We'll allow O'Neil to reveal more when we run an interview shortly.

CROSSOVER

Always popular, inter-company crossovers seem to be making a big comeback with the following announced or in the works:

- * DC and Dark Horse are joining forces for an Aliens/Superman link-up.
- * Both DC and Malibu were polling fans at the recent San Diego Comic Con to find out which pairings in a possible DC/Ultaverse crossover would be most popular. The resulting potential pairings were: Prime & Shazam, Sludge & Aquaman, Freex & Primal Force, Firearm & Starman, Mantra & The Spectre, Hardcase & Batman, The Nightman & Huntress, Solitaire & Superman, Prototype & Flash, and Ultraforce & Justice

STATESIDE COLLAPSE

One of Britain's largest chains of comic stores, Stateside Comics plc, was closed for business on Friday, September 30, amongst rumours of receivers being called in and staff having their employment immediately terminated. Checking at the Oxford Street branch of Stateside at Virgin on Monday revealed only a notice across the access stairway saying that the shop was closed until further notice. In Glasgow the closure was more obvious as the Virgin store is open plan: Stateside's area was boarded up on the instructions of the receivers, leaving the store's manager and customers with a pre-Christmas eyesore.

In under ten years Stateside built itself a reputation for carrying the widest range of Golden Age and Silver Age titles in the UK and an equal reputation for aggressive marketing and self-promotion. As well as their main outlet in Barnet, East London, a shop was opened at Virgin's Marble Arch store in 1992 - and held a record breaking *Judgement on Gotham* signing - with further franchise stores opened at Virgin in Birmingham, Glasgow, Oxford Street, London, and Nottingham, and at Hamleys in Regent Street, London. Stateside

also introduced a Preferred Readers Club in 1992 and had close connections with the *Comic Book Price Guide For Great Britain*, which itself caused concern amongst dealers since Stateside effectively controlled general perception of growth in the comic medium in the UK.

The closure became a major talking point at this year's UKCAC: as rumours spread during Friday's trade day reaction was mixed. The close links between stores in the UK, usually to the benefit of the industry as a whole, and the usual problems of liquidation (in that banks foreclosing on debts will have first access to assets) does mean that some UK dealers will almost certainly never recover debts from Stateside.

One customer trying to contact Stateside was told that a statement would be issued within a week, although the only certain information as we go to press is that Stateside are attempting to re-open their Barnet branch and continue their mail-order service. It will almost certainly be under another name.

DEFIANT NO MORE

Denying that the company were in the process of folding, Defiant

Comics' Jim Shooter has claimed that the company is on temporary "hiatus". However, employees at the Manhattan-based company were dismissed on August 31 when they received their final paycheques. Defiant's latest title, *Prudence & Caution* had only recently been suspended indefinitely, the company citing creative overcommitment as the reason and immediately cancelled issues #3-5 which had already been solicited.

An announcement had been hoped for at August's San Diego Comic Con: Shooter had been in Los Angeles negotiating a deal with a major film studio which, according to Clark Smith, was near to completion in mid-August and would have meant the studio would finance the comic book operation and Shooter would develop Defiant characters for film projects. "Unfortunately," says Smith, "last minute complications caused the film company to withdraw its offer and sent us right back to square one."

All Defiant titles have ceased publication, although Shooter is still reported to be in continued negotiation with prospective financial investors.



FEVER

League. The Batman/Hardcase looks the most likely to us.

* Harris Comics and Jim Valentino's Shadowline are to produce two stories bringing together Vampirella and Shadowhawk in two 48-page specials.

* Malibu are talking to Dale Keown about a possible Sludge/Pitt crossover.

* According to Rob Liefeld, Extreme Studios and Marvel are working on a number of crossovers, including Youngblood/Avengers, Prophet/Punisher and Supreme/Silver Surfer. Which all seemed pretty cut and dried until Tom DeFalco announced that he and Liefeld were only in discussion and plans were far from being definite.

★★★★★★★★★US NEWSBRIEF★★★★★★★★★

BLACKBALL

The Trencher X-Mas Bites 1994 *Holiday Blowout* is a 48-page, only-one-year-late Xmas special from Keith Giffen.

DARK HORSE

DH have plans for various CGW titles which include a change for *Catalyst: Agents of Change* who will become *Agents of Law*. *The Machine* and *Motorhead* will be getting their own titles (the former in December) and *Vortex* will be teaming up with *Nexus* for a 4-issue mini-series. They're keeping close tabs on the origin of *Ghost* who continues to flit around various titles, making her next guest shot in *X #8*.

In time for Christmas, Dark Horse have various collections available, including a second printing for the trade paperback of *Give Me Liberty* by Frank Miller & Dave Gibbons. In fact it's a bit of a Miller month, with a hardcover edition of the first *Sin City* series priced at \$25, the release of *A Dame to Kill For* as a special limited edition hardcover, deluxe, signed, numbered, with slipcase (hey! We want a review copy!) at \$90, *The Babe Wore Red* a 32-page one-shot reprinting the strip first published in *Previews* plus two short stories - including the rare 'The Customer Is Always Right' from the 1993 *San Diego ComicCon Book*.



The third *Sin City* series, the five-part *The Big Fat Kill* also debuts under the

Legend banner, which Miller promises is the toughest tale yet, featuring the return of Dwight and various other familiar characters from previous stories.

Adam Warren's *Dirty Pair: Sim Hell* is released as a trade paperback on December 13, gathering the 4-part mini-series which pitches Kei and Yuri into the simulated reality of a computer.

FANTACO

British creator Noel Hannon has carved himself a niche at Fantaco with no less than three titles solicited for November shipping: *Air Warriors Volume Two* is a graphic novel concluding the chronicle of *Air City* and its battles with the fire-breathing dragons, available in both softcover and hardcover; *Legends of the Living Dead #1* is an ongoing zombie title, and *Guardians of Eden* tells the tale of a nanotech super-soldier and his quest to kill off members of the Eden System.

HARRIS COMICS

Chains of Chaos by Tom Sniegowski, John Stinsman & Joe Weems is a 3-part series that will define a new look for *Vampirella*'s world and reintroduces another old Warren character, the reality-travelling adventurer known only as *The Rook*.

IMAGE

Rob Liefeld's Extreme Studios will publish their first title under a new imprint, Maximum Press, in December. Maximum Press will publish non-superhero titles by Extreme creators; the first is *Warchild* by Rob Liefeld, Eric Stephenson & Chap Yaep.

Meanwhile, for November, Extreme release the first issue of two for *Battlestone* which looks at the background of the one-time Youngblood leader to forming the rogue Brigade team and *Youngblood: Year One* written by Kurt Busiek with art by Liefeld and Danny Miki. It is what it says.

Whilce Portacio will continue to draw *Networks* beyond the three issue mini-series, planning to pencil at least the first nine issues, after which he hopes to develop a new Image project.

Gen 13 will shortly be collected into trade paperback, and will be followed by a regular ongoing series in 1995.

Chris Claremont joins Mark

Silvestri's *Cyberforce* as writer with #9 and reintroduces The Huntsman, last seen over in *WildC.A.T.s*.

Erik Larsen's Highbrow Entertainment publish their first new title in *The Deadly Duo* with art by Andy Smith & Randy Elliott, the duo being Kill Cat and the Kid Avenger. *Freak Force* #11 begins a 3-part 'Invasion' storyline as the Galactic Sheriffs decide to clean up our sector of the galaxy. And Erik releases his first ashcan - *Highbrow Entertainment Ashcan* with 16 pages previewing various series old and new.

Comics not enough? Why not try Image Candy Bars - chocolate bars stamped with the Image logo

and wrapped in gold foil (what else?) and an Image-crew jam wrapper!

MALIBU

The second wave of Bravura titles will begin with *Strikeback* #1, already solicited by your friendly local comic shop, plus *The Man Called A*X* by Marv Wolfman & Shawn McManus, *Breed II: The Book of Revelations* by Jim Starlin (which both debut in December), *The Nocturnals* by Daniel Brereton, and an as yet untitled new project by Howard Chaykin.

Deep Space Nine: Lightstorm is a 48-page one-shot sequel to the series 'Hearts and Minds',



reintroducing Captain Kol and the crew of the Klingon ship 'Avwl' as they enlist the help of Sisko to defeat a hostile alien race.

The Ultraverse adds *The Squad #0-A* detailing the origins of Hardcase's first team, as narrated by Linda 'Starburst' Warren, as laid down by James Hudnall, Scott Benefiel & Jasen Rodriguez.

MILLENIUM

Millenium become the new publishers of Walter (Chekov) Koenig's *Raver* for a new two-issue series which reveals how the bumbling,



neurotic Norman Walters became Raver.

TEKNO COMIX

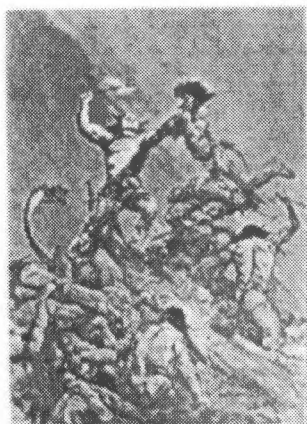
Tekno comics are backing their million dollar advertising campaign with a further incentive to retailers to stock their titles: the first three issues of Neil Gaiman's *Mr Hero* the *Newmatic Man*, Leonard Nimoy's *Primortals* (both debuting in December) and Gene Roddenberry's *Lost Universe* will be published as fully-returnable, meaning that shops can order in confidence that any unsolds can be returned to the publisher. This is the first time that a major new publisher has agreed to make their books returnable through the direct market system. "By limiting retailer liability, Tekno, with its extremely high-profile and top-flight creative people, may in the long run be helping those very same retailers to expand the market for all products

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offered for sale through their stores," said Bill Schanes, Diamond Distributor's Vice President of Purchasing.

Big Entertainment - Tekno Comix's parent company - has also retained the services of the William Morris Agency to sell book rights to the various characters and are



currently negotiating various hardcover and paperback deals.

And more good news is that Bryan Talbot will be the artist for the Rick Veitch written *Teknophage*, adding some weight to the series of Neil Gaiman-created titles. Bryan's strip will debut as a six-page segment of the first release, *Mr Hero*, due in December.

VALIANT

Valiant will be repackaging three of the original Gold Key titles that were the basis for their early successes: *The Original Magnus Robot Fighter* (by Russ Manning), *The Original Dr Solar Man of the Atom* and *The Original Turok, Son of Stone* (by Alberto Giolitti) will all present 30 pages of the originals, recoloured and with covers by modern Valiant artists. All three will ship in December, and are priced \$2.95.

Meanwhile, *X-O Manowar* shifts to a weekly schedule for November as 'The Wolfbridge Affair' fills issues #37-40. The story reveals what happens to Aric's love, former-Canadian Secret Service Agent Randy Cartier when members of her old squad begin to die one by one and Aric arrives in Canada to where she fled when Aric caused the death of her friend Paul. Valiant are also releasing *X-O Manowar: Retribution*, reprinting the first four issues plus an 8-page sourcebook.

The British Invasion arrives at Valiant with *Ninjak #13* written by Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning. Along with Brit penciller Andrew Currie they form the new regular creative team. And there's the *Visitor vs The Valiant Universe* which introduces a mysterious stranger with vast powers, one who has to face most of the top Valiant heroes in this two-

partar which leads into next month's *The Visitor #1*. Artist is our own Bryan Hitch from a script by Kevin VanHook.

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

Two new titles from Viz for November: *Macross II: The Micron Conspiracy* is a 5-parter by James (Hardcase) Hudnall & Schulhoff Tam an all-new sequel to the popular Japanese series. Plus Rumiko Takahashi's *Mermaid Forest* is gathered into a 256-page graphic novel which collects the nine chapters which appeared in *Animerica* plus the 4-issue *Mermaid Forest* mini-series.

THE END OF PRICE GUIDES?

The collapse of the speculation market in comics has had a number of effects on magazines that have concentrated on price guide listings to fill their pages. *Comics Values Monthly* has shut down for "an indefinite period" according to publisher Attic Books, and *Hero Illustrated* underwent a radical slimming down with issue #16. *Hero's* publisher, Warrior, are said to be in negotiation with a major book company to develop a semi-annual price guide. The British entry in the speculation stakes, *Comic Speculator News* has folded after a short period as the direct market

giveaway, *Comic News*.

But just when you thought it was safe comes *Combo #1* which advertises itself as full of "free stuff" and 50,000 prices. And *The Wizard Press Comic Book Price Guide* with more than 300 pages of price guide. Thought-provoking, eh? On the more serious side, a new fortnightly tabloid paper arrived in the USA in August, the *Pop Art Times* published by Jacquie Kibin and edited by Patrick T. Butters. Covering comics, animation and other visual media, the paper hopes to reach a target audience of 500,000 by Christmas.

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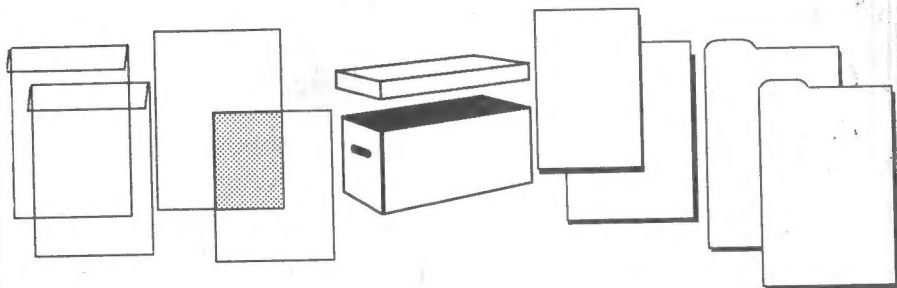
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PEOPLE AND PUBLISHING

John Bolton's *Vampir* collection of 11 trading cards featuring vampire women should hit the shops in December. It'll be followed by the *Vampir Theatre* collection next March, gathering his covers from the *Interview With A Vampire* series, and a phonecard of his infamous 'Fetish' cover from the November '93 *Deadline*...**John Byrne** is putting *Next Men* on hiatus with #30, saying: "At the end of the latest story arc, *Lies*, the *Next Men* are propelled into a world they've never seen before. It's

just going to take six or seven months for the readers to catch up with them!" The title will resume in early-mid 1995, the first issue of the 4-part *War* story arc...**Travis Charest**, so 'hot' he's hardly drawn anything, will be taking over *WildC.A.T.S.* for the duration of **Jim Lee's** sabbatical from the title; **James Robinson** will be writing...**Continuum Comics** have found themselves a new financial backer and will henceforth be known as **August House**. "The new name is simply a gesture towards getting rid of

the old and bringing in the new," says Publisher Joseph Naftali. "We wanted to get rid of the old baggage completely. We are a new and strong company." Their first release in December, however, is not so new: *The Dark* #1 contains "a large proportion" of *The Dark* #7 plus eight new pages of story and art, plus a cover by Nelson & George Perez...**Jess Deacon**, General Manager of Titan Distributors, left the company of August 31 citing health reasons. His responsibilities are being

taken up by **John Hitchen**, manager of Diamond UK for two years before the companies amalgamated...**Jo Duffy** (ex-*Catwoman*) is taking over the writing of *Barb Wire* with #10...**Kevin Eastman**, co-creator of the *Turtles*, and **Mark Martin** are developing a new project for ABC television entitled *Underwhere* which will also become a comic...**Mark Ellis** and **Melissa Martin**, co-founders of Millenium Publications, recently joined the staff of Firstlight Entertainment, publisher of *Javerts* and *Thresherz*. Ellis holds the position of Editor-in-Chief, while Martin assumes the post of Art Director...**Harlan Ellison** is developing *The Drop Dead*

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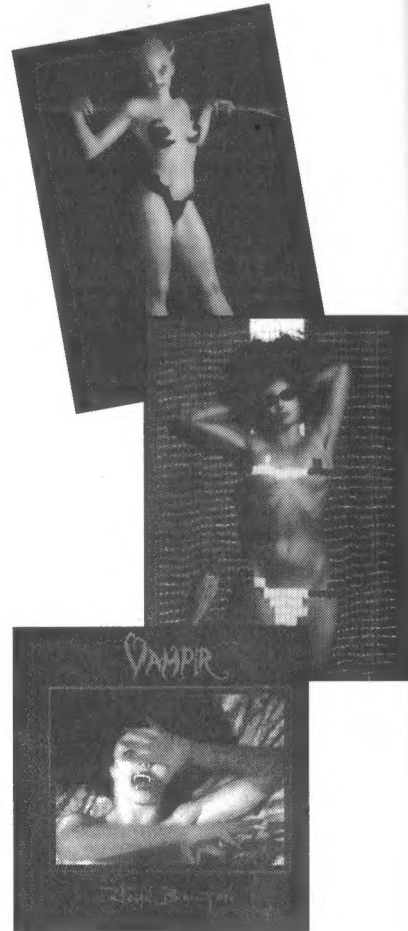
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Comedians with Silver Moon Comics.

The title will debut next July alongside another Silver Moon title, *Hourglass* which is being written by Marv Wolfman. Ellison is developing characters and will oversee the plot; the script is by Jan Strnad and a talent search is underway to find a previously unpublished artist...**Frank Frazetta** provides the cover of *Penthouse Comix*

November/December issue...and if you've discovered the latter on sale in the UK you may not have noticed that some of the pages are missing, namely a preview of Milo Manara's *Click 3*...**Neil Gaiman** is currently writing the *Angela* mini-series for Image; the first issue is being pencilled and should be ready for December release...There's more Highbrow Entertainment from **Erik Larsen** due: future titles include two mini-series, *Liberty and Justice* featuring SuperPatriot, and *The*

Dragon - Blood & Guts featuring *Savage Dragon*, plus a comedy title, *The Deadly Duo* written by Larsen with art by Andy Smith & Randy Elliot, and *Star* by Tom and Mary Bierbaum...After 15 years on 'The Far Side', **Gary Larson** is to quit the strip...**David Lloyd** is currently working on 'The Pencil' for Byron Priess, based on a Raymond Chandler story - the first time his estate have sanctioned a comic strip based on Chandler's famous Philip Marlowe character. He's also working on *The Horrorist* with **Jamie Delano**...Former Daredevil writer, **Ann Nocenti**, is currently working on *The Darkness* for Image, to be released in 1995...**Joe Quesada** and **Jimmy Palmiotti**, who worked together on *X-O Manowar* #0 and three issues of *Ninjak*, will shortly publish their self-penned, pencilled and inked *Ash*, about a fireman-turned-superhero. In an interesting publicity move, they've been allowed to paint a logo on the uniform of a local Poway, CA fireman's uniform, although it will only be used for visits by the fire department to schools and functions. Palmiotti will be pencilling and inking *Vampirella* #0 for Harris Comics from a script by his former *Ninjak* scribe, **Mark Moretti**...**Mark Silvestri**'s Top Cow Productions is working with Angel Studios to develop a virtual reality adventure site; it will feature new characters who should find their way to the 4-colour page in a new title, *Weapon Zero* which Silvestri hopes **Walt Simonson** will write...**Andi Watson**, creator of *Samurai Jam* for Slave Labor, tells us that he's finally caught up with technology with issue 4, which has been almost entirely created on a Macintosh, including all the drawing, lettering and colouring. It should be out in October...**Barry Windsor-Smith** may still be editing *Rune* but his next creations were previewed through two full-page adverts in a recent edition of *Comics Buyer's Guide*. There are still no clues as to who will publish the two titles, *The Freebooters* and *Gods*, but news should be released shortly...**Win Wiacek** has recently signed up a contract with Esso and the London Zoo to produce a 'Save the Tiger' benefit comic..."Just what we need, eh? Another benefit comic," he told us, but this is a project he's wanted to work on for ages...

336 pages and featuring over 300 colour illustrations. The coverage of Golden Age American titles is as comprehensive as you would expect from someone who is a director of Stateside Comics, and a large part of the book is made up of a lengthy alphabetical listing of titles (not a price guide, we hasten to add). The book touches on almost every important title published in the USA but reduces the first 75 years of British history to about 2 pages. With an introduction by Jim Shooter (whose "God, I love it [comics]" comments may now ring a little regrettably hollow, having been overtaken by events), the book is priced £19.99, which is good value for a hardcover of this size.

FLEETWAY

2000AD has two new thrills lined-up for Prog 912 which goes on sale on October 28th: Skizz III is written and drawn by Jim Baikie continues the adventures of alien interpreter Skizz after a 31 month break, and Bix Barton returns in 'Nigel the Napoleon of Notting Hill' by Pete Milligan & Jim McCarthy. Red Razors, Button Man and Judge Dredd continue.

Fleetway specials include a second *Best of 2000AD Special Edition*, which should be on sale now, with a gold-ink cover, featuring Judge Dredd, Slaine and ABC Warriors; another 132-page monster special is *The Complete Judge Dredd* with a silver-ink cover on sale November 5.

Both are priced £2.25. The *2000AD Winter Special #6* has a horror theme this year, and goes on sale November 19.

The Best of 2000AD Monthly is promoted for issues 110 and 111. The former should be out now featuring Zenith and a full-colour poster. The latter carries cover-mounted sticker of the best Zenith covers from *2000AD* and stars Luke Kirby.

Fleetway have just been through one of their regular internal organisation shake ups which has split their comics into three groups: the pre-school titles, *2000AD* and related, under the control of Chris Power, and the Licensed & Juvenile department which handles *Thunderbirds*, *Joe 90*,

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BOXTREE

Boxtree have solicited both *Ranma 1/2 Book One* and *Book Two* for November shipping, both containing 160 pages of Rumiko Takahashi story and art for £5.99, as well as the *Daredevil: Man Without Fear* trade paperback by Frank Miller & John Romita Jr. for £9.99.

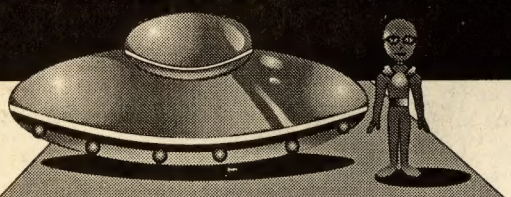
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KNOCKABOUT

Knockabout are promoting the publication of *Famous Tales of Fat Freddy's Cat* in hardcover with a visit from Freak Brothers creator, Gilbert Shelton. An exhibition of his work begins a run at the National Museum of Cartoon Art, 183 Eversholt Street, London NW1 from November 14, and signings are lined up as follows: Saturday, November 12th: Forbidden Planet, London, 1pm; Tuesday, 15th, Friar Street Bookshop, Reading, 1pm; Wednesday, 16th: Tower Records, Piccadilly Circus, 1pm; Thursday, 17th: AKA Books & Comics, Glasgow, 12-2pm and Forbidden Planet, Edinburgh, 3.30pm; Friday, 18th: Forbidden Planet, Dublin, 2.30pm.

MANDARIN

The new Equinox Manga line has been delayed until January 16th to allow time for publicity and marketing of the four books currently planned, which include three titles by Katsuhiro Otomo (see CW #30 for details). Mandarin will also be issuing the next batch of 2000AD Books in March, having rested the series for a year. The new launches will include two Judge Dredd titles - 'The Book of the Dead' by Grant Morrison, Mark Millar & Dermot Power, plus a collection of stories by Greg Staples - and a reprinting of Key Walker's Anderson Psi story, 'Childhood's End'.

MANGA PUBLISHING

The relaunch issue, #16, mentioned last month should be on sale now. This issue will begin reprinting 'Grand Mal', the *Bubblegum Crisis* strip by Adam Warren in full colour, as well as the continuing adventures of the Tank Police in Masamune Shirow's 'Tank Police' and Otomo's classic 'Akira'. The issue has a set of *Bubblegum Crisis* collector's cards cover mounted. Other improvements are that the title is now squarebound, yet remains the same price.

LONDON CARTOON CENTRE

Before we start, a quick note of congratulations to Eve Stickler, organiser of the LCC on the birth of James on July 4th.

'The Worm' was the title of a strip compiled by a host of creators at the Trocadero in 1991, officially recognised as the longest comic strip in the world. It was hoped that the strip could be somehow published in all its glory soon after it was completed, but after initial interest, production costs proved too great for most publishers to contemplate. However, the strip may shortly be available electronically from Illumination Publishing Ltd. on floppy disk, CD-Rom and possibly on video. We'll keep you posted.

DC ROUND-UP

A lightning round-up of February cover-dated titles this month because the package arrived late - so apologies to everyone whose hard work I'm precisising down to the merest squib. *Black Lightning* returns in a new ongoing series, blasting everyone with lightning bolts at the behest of Tony Isabella, Eddy Newell & Ron McCain, #1 debuting December 20...There's a new Milestone on the block in *Holocaust*, a five-issue mini by Ivan Velez Jr., Tommy Lee Edwards & Steve Mitchell concentrating on the pyrokinetic powered rogue member of Blood Syndicate...Alan Grant & Martin Emond (the team behind *LoboCop* and *Lobo: In the Chair*) proudly present *Lobo/Deadman: The Brave and the Bald*, a 48-page one-shot in which Lobo promises to bring in Deadman dead or...deader. But the price on the latter's head is a ruse by Darkseid to bring Deadman to Apokolips... once again DC solicit *Modesty Blaise*, this time as a 144-page softcover graphic novel by Peter O'Donnell & Dick Giordano. December 20th. At \$19.95 it's going on my Christmas wants list...*Street Fighter: The Battle for Shadaloo* is the movie adaptation of...go on, guess which forthcoming Jean-Claude Van Damme film...it's by Mike McAvennie, Nick Napolitano & Bob Downs...Carlos Ezquerro makes his DC debut with *Bob the Galactic Bum* which takes a 4-issue bumming tour of the seamier underside of the DC Universe, helped in the first issue by the arrival of Lobo and some pirates. Alan Grant & John Wagner are the writers...a few guest artists: Klaus Janson inks *Superman: The Man of Steel* #41, Randy Green & Andrew Pepoy are on *Justice League America* #96, William Rosado pencil *New Titans* #118, Stuart Immonen & Jose Marzon Jr. are the new regular team on *Adventures of Superman* from #520, Jerry Prosser, Fred Harper & Jason Minor are the new team debuting on *Animal* #80, Paul Kupperberg & Chris Wozniak guest on *Gunfire* #9, and Carl Critchlow is the artist of *Lobo* #13...

The Vertigo Tarot Deck and book have been delayed by six weeks and will now ship on January 10 so as not to clash with the Skybox Vertigo trading card set...*Sandman: Worlds' End* is the latest hardcover from Vertigo, 168 pages gathering issues #51-56 with an introduction by Stephen King...*Tainted* is the last of three 64-page Vertigo one-shots by 'Vertigo Voices' creators, in this case Jamie Delano & Al Davison about a gentle man who's growing old and starting to feel it, along with violent emotions and extruding, disturbing childhood memories - and his apartment begins to smell, the odour of something slightly rotten...

This just in...Another Bane one-shot is in the works...The next *Judge Dredd/Batman* crossover should be ready for release in April '95...*The Demon* is to be cancelled with issue #58, but Garth Ennis & John McCrear are working on a replacement...

MARVEL ROUND-UP

The recent shift of all X-titles to a higher format and higher price seems to be only the beginning of a trend. *Incredible Hulk* #426 will be the first issue to follow the successful deluxe edition path. Available two weeks earlier than the standard \$1.50 edition, the December shipping issue will be priced at \$1.95. "Fans will appreciate the extra care we will put into the book," says editor Bobby Chase. "Liam Sharp's beautiful illustrious new art and line quality will be better served by the high quality printing." This will be his first issue following the departure of Gary Frank & Cam Smith. We'll be talking to Liam and inker Robin Riggs about the title's new direction in a couple of issues time.

Marvel are currently price testing four titles in un-named areas of the USA. *Thunderstrike Double Feature*, *Avengers Double Feature*, *Spider-Man Magazine* and *Marvel Super Heroes Magazine* have all done particularly poorly: Diamond Distributors have estimated that shops have ordered on average less than 7 copies of each of the Doubles and less than 2 of each of the Magazines. The prices of these will be lowered in certain regions.

Marvel are also planning a line of novels based on their most popular characters which will debut in 1995. Already commissioned is *The Ultimate Spider-Man*, an anthology with stories by Peter David, Craig Shaw Gardner, David Michelinie, Jo Duffy and others, and *The Venom Factor* by Diane Duane. In the UK Virgin will also be publishing a line of character novels in the tradition of their Judge Dredd line. Previews of the Spider-Man stories will be published flip-side to November's Spider-Man titles: *Amazing Spider-Man* #397, *Spectacular Spider-Man* #220, *Web of Spider-Man* #120 and *Spider-Man* #54. All these are increased to 48-pages.

What's the reasoning behind Ronald Perelman buying up Marvel stock? He bought up more than a million shares in the May-July period when prices were low, pushing their value up by \$3 a share. Stock-market analysts at *Comic World* - where we believe in the 'buy low, sell high' theory - have been heard muttering about Perelman waiting for the flurry of animation and movie deals to bump the price high and maybe seeing him move on.

Marvel stepped into the computer age on August 25 and became the first comic company to go online on CompuServe for the *Generation X* conference, where subscribers were offered a unique preview of the title. The book could also be viewed on the following online services: Internet ([ftp host: alpha.vyne.com; directory: pub/marvel](http://ftp.alpha.vyne.com; directory: pub/marvel)); *PC file name: genx.zip; Mac file name genx.sea; America OnLine (keyword: GRAPHICS; go to NEW FILES library); and Genie (page 1320 in MARVEL COMICS library).

Silver Surfer celebrates his 100th issue with a 48-page special and an eye-popping pixel hologram cover. Events over the past couple of months come to a head inside where the Surfer has surrendered his soul to

Mephisto - and now he wants it back!

The 'Hands of the Mandarin' storyline concludes through the pages of *Force Works* #7, *War Machine* #10 and *Iron Man* #312. Various friends and foes gather in Hong Kong to face or aid the Mandarin in his plans to send China back to feudalism; it's a major turning point in the relationship of Tony Stark and James Rhodes who will bury the hatchet - in the ground or in each other? This storyline will tell you which.

The *Incredible Hulk's* 425th issue will see him revert to the old "Hulk Smash!" personality as 'The Fall of the Pantheon' concludes with a 48-page special with a 2-channel holo-clear cover (y'what?). Departing team Gary Frank and Cam Smith tackle the front end of the book whilst new boys Liam Sharp & Robin Riggs take over at half time.

Tales of Suspense is the latest Marvel Select title, the long-awaited Iron Man/Captain America team-up by James Robinson & Colin MacNeil, pitching the duo against DANTE, a terrorist group led by Cap's old nemesis Emiel Stein who have plans to assassinate the president of a major Japanese company.

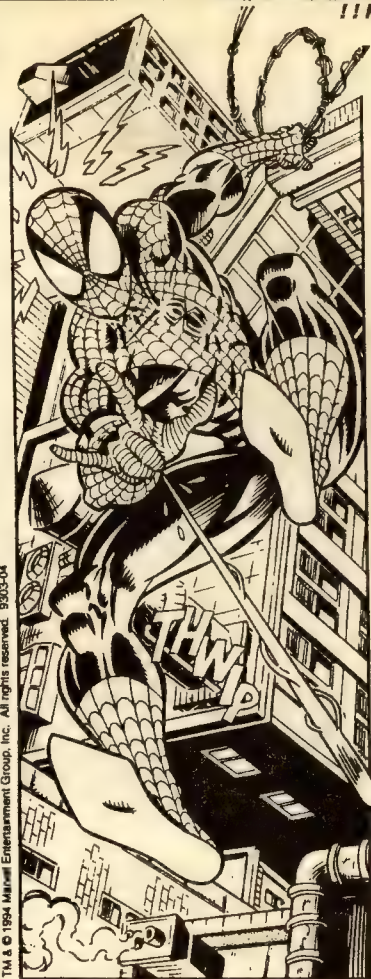
Mike Baron & Bill Reinhold present *Punisher: Empty Quarter* on 29 November, a 64-page bookshelf special in which the Punisher - impersonating Saracen - infiltrates a convention of global terrorists...

The regular Spider-Books are 48-pages this month to allow for a flip-sided preview from *The Ultimate Spider-Man* short story collection (see main news), but there's bigger news: a new 4-part mini-series debuts 1 November. *Spider-Man: Friends & Enemies* is by Danny Fingeroth & Ron Lim which brings together Spider-Man, Darkhawk, Nova and Speedball and introduces a new team of superhuman teenagers called The Metahumes. The New York teens discover a set of crystals bought back to Earth by Darkhawk which bestow superpowers on them - and a hustler who uses the powers to further his own ends. Will the Metahumes be friends or foes?

Not enough Spider-Man this month? So there's another new 4-part mini-series, *Spider-Man: The Power of Terror* out on 29 November by Greg Wright & Darick Robertson which pits Spidey against Silvermane, back once more and out to rule the underworld. This time he wants a new, more powerful body to do it in - Deathlok's.

Doom 2099 #25 sees the departure of John Francis Moore and a celebratory cover - for the anniversary, not Moore's leaving, you cynics! Doom gets some new armor, too...and while were in this decade, Mark Buckingham is the returning artist for *Ghost Rider* 2099 #9.

Because you demayanded it, sugah - the *Rogue* four-part mini-series by Howard Mackie, Mike Wieringo & Terry Austin debuts on 8 November. It's a sequel to last year's *Gambit* mini-series (the ragin' cajun guest stars), wherein Rogue heads off in search of Cody who has been kidnapped by the Assassin's Guild.



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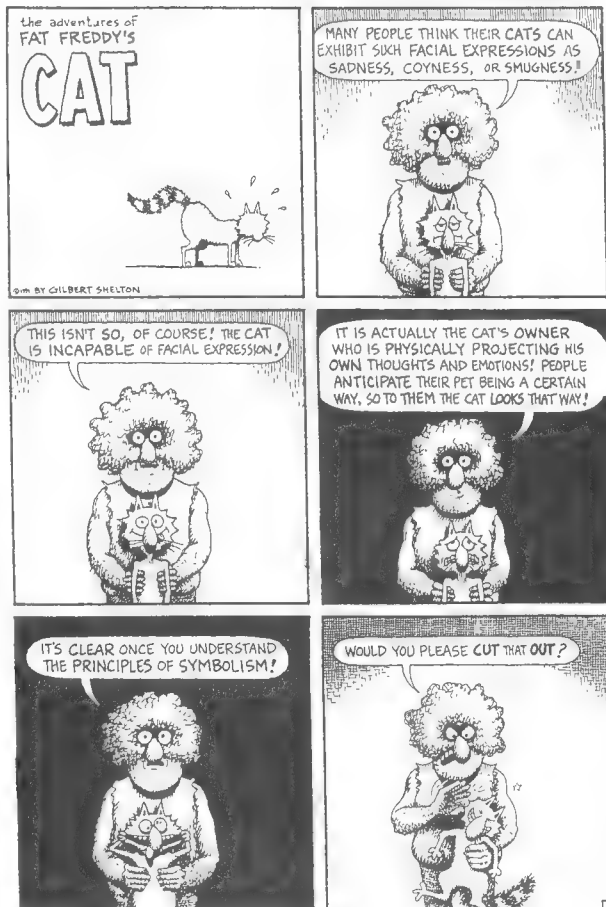
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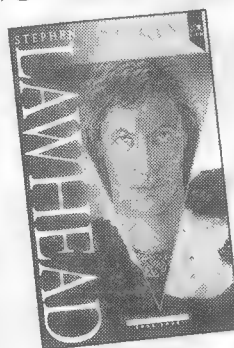
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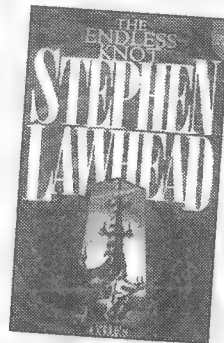
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Having banged some Doom and Excalibur down the Mojo to silence some filthy Colonials, and waiting on a faxed confirmation of my newly Marvel-purchased immunity, I've been wading through a pile of recent Hellstorm fanmail. I

Good Rumour time (as stated in CWs passim, a Good Rumour is a bit of industry gossip that is unlikely to be true, but makes good telling anyway, so preface all statements with "allegedly"); alleged one-

The Mojo is screaming. I'm off.
Please return next month for something
less piecemeal.



WARREN ELLIS writes comics and lives. He has a fax machine. Please direct your kind attention to *Excalibur*, *Hellstorm*, *Doom 2099* and the forthcoming *Druid*; *Highway Zero*, *Ashes*, *Marvels*, *Magic and Loss* and *Satana*.

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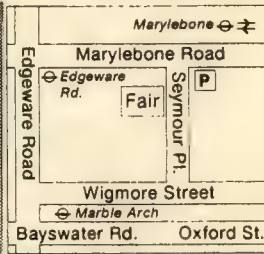
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Seymour Chwast, a short w-arylebone and und stations, with nearby.

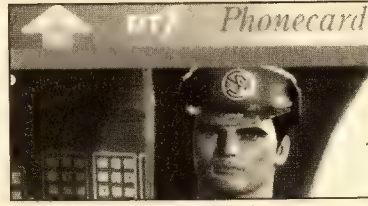
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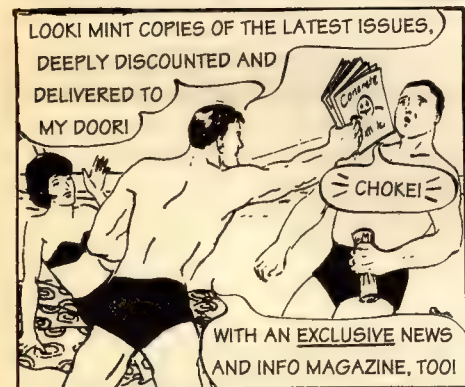
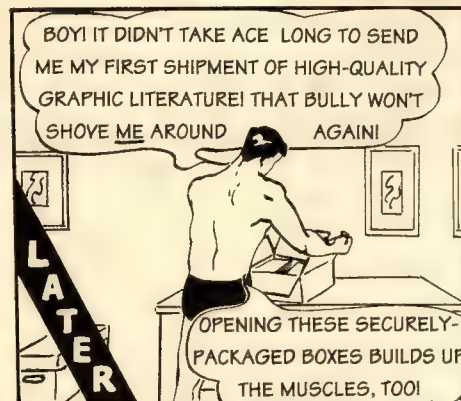
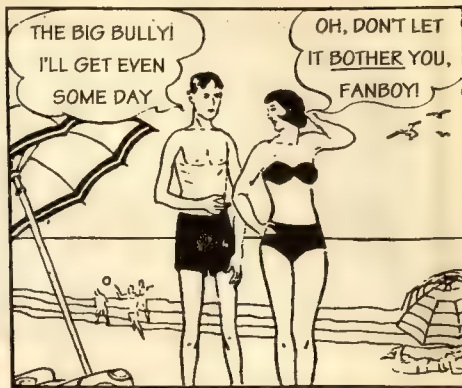
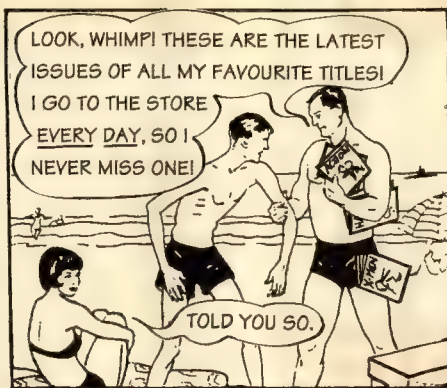


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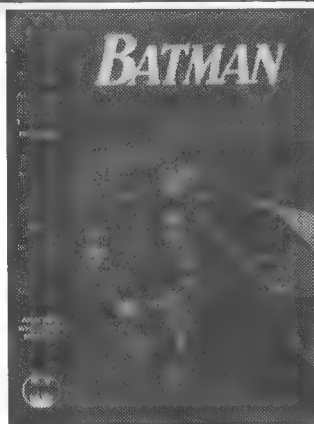
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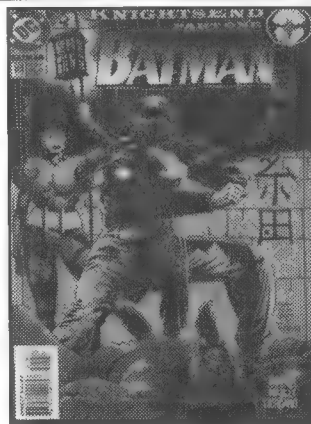
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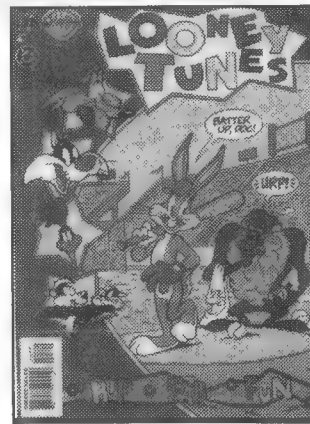
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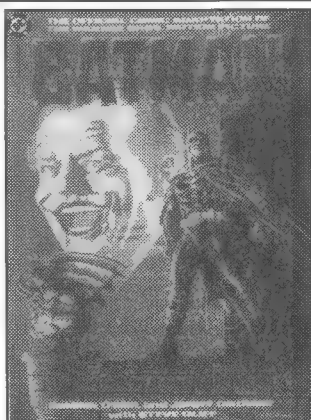
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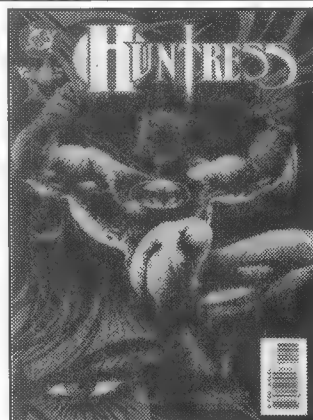
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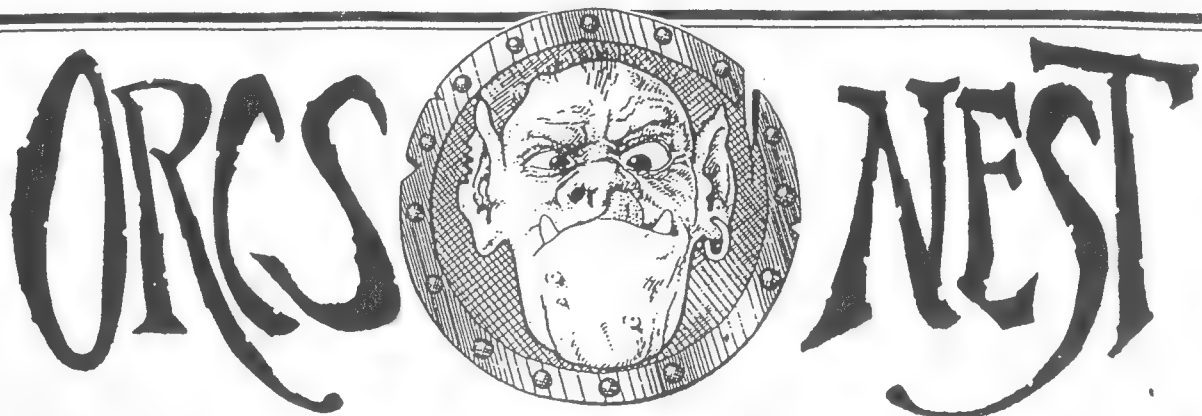
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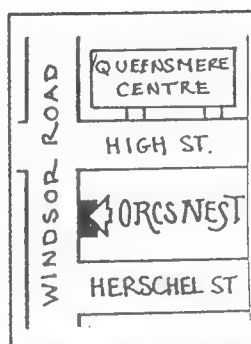
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LIGHTS...

CAMERAS...

ACTION!



What is it about comic strips that makes them so perfect for turning into movies? The summer saw the opening of *The Crow*, and August's release of *The Mask* opened in more cinema's than any other film in British cinema history. Coming soon is *Time Cop*, created with both comics and the cinema in mind.

Of course it's not just one-way traffic. When Dark Horse released *Aliens vs Predator* it became the highest-selling independent comic the direct market had known, selling over 400,000 and holding it's top of the pole position until Rob Liefeld's *Youngblood* launched Image; two months later Todd McFarlane redefined independent comics sales with *Spawn* (a likely candidate for the silver

screen if there ever was one). The number of options taken out in the independent comic sector is as great as those from the major players which perhaps reflects the depth of characterisation and eccentricity the non-mainstream offers its creators; the attraction offered by comics is two-fold - the mainstream has easily recognisable (and therefore marketable) heroes who have become icons - Batman, Superman, Spider-Man - and the independents have the often off-the-wall element that can make characters an instant hit.

Over the next two years we'll be seeing a comic cinema bonanza with the release of *Tank Girl*, *Judge Dredd*, *Batman Forever*, *Spider-Man* and *Catwoman* - all potential blockbusters. There are over 50 other comic related

projects slated to go before the camera over the next couple of years. Since *Batman* became the smash-hit of 1989, movie studios have had to take comics seriously, although having seen the law of diminishing returns in action through the steep decline in takings from the four Superman movies, one would imagine the heads of Warner's were nervously watching their \$50m budget. Michael Keaton as *Batman* was not the fans choice and Jack Nicholson, for all his fine performances, was not always a name that guaranteed major box-office action: only one of the films he had made since *The Shining* eight years earlier was a major box-office success (*Terms of Endearment*). The Postman *Always Rings Twice*, *The Border*, *Prizzi's Honor* and *Heartburn* had all

lost money. *The Witches of Eastwick* only just crept over its production budget, and his immediate pre-*Batman* movie *Ironweed* had been a major bomb.

But *Batman* became the fourth highest-grossing movie of all time, and the success, although not quite so great, of the second movie cemented the notion that a comic strip could not only produce \$100m winners, but that the subject matter of superheroes did not have to be treated lightly. Tim Burton's gothic vision of the Dark Knight was light years away from the high-camp of the sixties tv show, paving the way for the recent hit, *The Crow*, whose production had been plagued with problems, not least the on-set death of lead player Brandon Lee. However, it climbed to the \$50m

mark by August. The Mask topped the box-office charts with its first weekend release take of \$25m, ousting the phenomenally successful Forrest Gump, and action strips from Terry and the Pirates to Brick Bradford became serials, although a steady trickle came from the then relatively new format of comic books, including Batman, Superman, Captain America and Captain Marvel and Blackhawk.

The attraction seems to have been that the characters lent themselves to high speed adventures which would instantly project their viewers into the action, the characters so much larger than life they disguised the cheap sets and occasionally sometimes rather sneaky (even ut comic adaptations were not a phenomenon of the 1980s. Whatever the answer to that question - what is it about comic strips that make them so perfect for turning into movies? - the switch from comic frame to movie frame has been going on for nearly 100 years, beginning with a series of films which date from only a year or so after the birth of cinema....

IN THE BEGINNING...

The first characters to transfer from comic pages to celluloid were almost certainly Weary Willie and Tired Tim, two wandering tramps created by Tom Browne for the front cover of Illustrated Chips in 1896. From 1897



they flickered through a series of short films beginning with Weary Willie (which, incidentally, failed to credit Browne as their creator); in all the world-wide wanderers starred in 18 films in total between 1897 and 1908.

Even longer-lived was Ally Sloper, generally considered the first British comic character, whose film debut came in 1898's Ally Sloper's Visit to Brighton; Sloper was a popular character in Judy magazine, a Victorian entrepreneur whose various (usually financial) endeavours usually ended in disaster for Sloper and his partners. Sloper, although not as regular a visitor to the screens as Willie and Tim, was still making an appearance as late as 1920, by which time he was something of a jaded and faded comic star.

The earliest successes, however, came with the Saturday morning cliffhanger serials produced by Columbia, Republic, RKO and Monogram. The cliffhangers, made up of 12 or 15 chapters, glued their young audiences to their seats week after week, so named because of the precipitous end to each chapter. Many were inspired by American newspaper strips

and the particular success of Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers (1939, actually based on characters created in a short story by Philip Nowlan in 1929, although often thought to be inspired by a comic strip). What they lacked in budget they made up for in outrageous plot intrigues and devices, some (such as Dick Tracy) graduating to genuine movie action. Syndicated action strips

from Terry and the Pirates to Brick Bradford became serials, although a steady trickle came from the then relatively new format of comic books, including Batman, Superman, Captain America and Captain Marvel and Blackhawk.

The attraction seems to have been that the characters lent themselves to high speed adventures which would instantly project their viewers into the action, the characters so much larger than life they disguised the cheap sets and occasionally sometimes rather sneaky (even shaky) solutions to the previous weeks nail-biting cliffhanger. Then, of course, there was the instant attraction of adapting characters who were already known to the audience: if you could believe Superman could fly in the comics, how much better would it be to see him really fly. That movie magic has never been lost, and was very much the selling point of the 1978 Superman movie.

The longest running comic-into-cinema characters were Chic Young's Blondie, Fred Harmon's Red Ryder and Alex Raymond's Jungle Jim, whose silver screen exploits all reached double numbers. The nearest modern equivalent is the four episodes of Christopher Reeve's Superman - with a fifth seeming likely. Comics (again) seem prime franchises for sequels, with countless established villains to pick and choose from: a peek into the dank underbelly of Arkham Asylum reveals a pantheon of supervillains and nut cases that could mean roles for every 'AA' and 'AB' grade actor in Hollywood. And as long as the films keep making money who can say how long the series will run.

The language of comics scriptwriting and film scriptwriting is similar: the comic strip is, if you care to look at it this way, a ready-made storyboard for a movie, making it attractive to film directors, many of whom number comics as part of their visual influence (Sam Raimi immediately springs to mind; the influence of comics on films like Darkman is unavoidable). Comics are condensed slices of action with an ability to immediately entertain within

TOP GROSSING COMIC BASED MOVIES

Figures relate to US domestic gross; the general rule of thumb is that doubling the US gross will give a good estimate of world-wide gross. Those films marked * are still on release.

1. Batman - (106,000,000)
2. Batman Returns - (162,800,000)
3. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles - (135,265,000)
4. Superman - The Movie - (134,200,000)
5. The Addams Family - (113,500,000)
6. Superman II - (100,200,000)
7. The Mask - (95,775,000)
8. Dick Tracy - (95,000,000)
9. TMNT 2 - Secret of the Sewers - (78,000,000)
10. Superman III - (56,050,000)
11. Dennis the Menace - (51,300,000)
12. The Crow* - (50,544,000)
13. Addams Family Values - (48,860,000)
14. Rocketeer - (46,700,000)
15. TMNT III - (42,274,000)
16. Popeye - (24,600,000)
17. Howard the Duck - (16,300,000)
18. Superman IV - (15,600,000)
19. Flash Gordon - (14,900,000)
20. Time Cop* - (12,000,000)



as short a space as 22 pages, their narrative pace kicks in as quickly as a movie's must to grab an action inspired audience. In a recent special edition of Hollywood Reporter dedicated to comic books in Hollywood, Stan Lee was quoted as saying, "A decade or more ago, I had to explain the value of comics. That doesn't happen any more. The people at the studios know how important it is to have a project with a ready-made audience," to which Michael De Luca, President of New Line Cinema adds "They're both visual to begin with, so it isn't that great a leap in adapting a comic book. I think a lot of comic creators are very film-influenced and a lot of directors coming up are comic book fans."

Mike Richardson of Dark Horse, at the forefront of turning comics into cinema attractions, lays the reason firmly on the strength of comics: "I think the motion picture industry is looking for properties with good characters and stories, and I think right now they've discovered comic books. We've seen the connection for many years: right now there's a great deal of creativity going on in the comic book industry, a wide variety of very exciting projects, and I think that's fired their interest."

The other advance in recent years which has put comics within the reach of film companies are the extraordinary progresses in special effects. It may be pushing the point, but if you can't see the wires it's easier for a viewer to suspend reality for two hours and really believe a man can fly. The idea of comics as films with an unlimited budget has had to fall by the wayside now that techniques like morphing are within the reach of most movie budgets. The much touted effects in *The Mask* which were once only available to animation directors can now be done with live-action, Mike Richardson commenting "I think many people have recognised the potential [of comics] in the past, but they've not known how to translate them to the screen."

With incredible effects available so cheaply now, the opportunity for characters to reach beyond the comic page and into a medium that has been stifled of fresh ideas for decades is something comic companies seem to be grasping with both hands. And whilst some of our own icons have been going through a creative dry spell - I'm thinking here in particular of most mainstream superhero titles, but with the caveat that some have been pulled from the mire in the last couple of years - the limitations of transferring our greatest heroes to the screen are now only with the imagination, and in comics everyone who reads them must know there's certainly no lack of that!

Pete Taylor

PRODUCTION HELL

THIS IS A ROUND-UP OF FILMS CURRENTLY IN PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT. SOME FILMS ARE UNLIKELY TO EVER REACH THE SCREEN - SOME HAVE ALREADY BEEN AROUND FOR YEARS - AND OTHERS ARE LIKELY TO SEE SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES BEFORE GOING BEFORE THE CAMERA. KEY: DIR = DIRECTOR; SCR = SCRIPT; ST = STARRING; PRD = PRODUCER; EXPRD = EXECUTIVE PRODUCER.

ACCIDENT MAN. In development, based on the Dark Horse comic by Pat Mills, which began life in Britain's own *Toxic!*.

AKIRA. Universal were said to be close to signing a big-budget live action version of Katsuhiro Otomo's manga in mid-1993, but nothing's been heard since.

ALFRED E. NEUMAN. (Quincy Davis Entertainment). Prd Steven Haft. Based on the *MAD Magazine* character.

THE AMERICAN. A script was completed by creator Mark Verheiden in 1990 for Silver Pictures, and the film supposedly went into turnaround in 1992. Then nothing happened and the rights reverted to Mark! It's still one he'd like to see made - see interview this issue.

ANNIE. (Rastar). Based on Little Orphan Annie. If this was intended to be based on the recent *Annie Warbucks* musical it's unlikely to appear, since the musical was basically a dud that hardly happened. The star, Lauren Gaffney became too old to appear, and the heralded \$5.5m budget was cut to \$1m, and the show was cancelled due to low ticket sales. A nationwide tour was also cancelled because not enough venues wanted the show.

ANNIE AND THE CASTLE OF TERROR. (Columbia). Was set to star Patrick Stewart as Daddy Warbucks and film in 1993 with Lewis Gilbert directing. The story was set in Europe with Annie and Daddy looking for a secret weapon during wartime.

ARCHIE. (DIC). Based on the Archie Publications character, created back in 1941. He's Archie Andrews, eternal student, and an equally famous cast of supporting characters in the shape of Jughead, Betty and Veronica, Moose and arch-rival Reggie.

THE BADGER. (Paramount). The multiple-personalised Badger created by Mike Baron & Jeff Butler has been optioned.

BARBARELLA. (Nelvana). A revamped version of the classic French strip which became a cult classic film vamped-up by Jane Fonda.

BATMAN FOREVER. (Warner Bros). Dir Joel Schumacher. Scr Lee Batchelor, Janet Batchelor, Akiva Goldman. St Val Kilmer, Tommy Lee Jones, Jim Carrey, Chris O'Donnell, Nicole Kidman, Drew Barrymore. ExPrd Tim Burton, Benjamin Melniker, Michael Uslan. Prd Peter Macgregor-Scott. See our feature elsewhere for the history of the various cast changes that have already made *Batman Forever* notorious. Principal shooting for the movie began in New York on September 21 and will subsequently relocate to Los Angeles where much of the film will be shot on a giant sound stage built in the hanger Howard Hughes once used to house the Spruce Goose, a huge flying boat designed to carry 750 passengers which he grounded after only a single one hour flight (if you've seen *The Rocketeer* movie, a model of the flying boat was used by Bill Campbell to escape from Hughes' hanger just before the climax). It has been said that the hanger was the only place large enough to house the giant sets of Gotham City being constructed. According to Jeff Walker, who spoke at San Diego Comic Con, "There will be all sorts of different aspects and areas of Gotham City that you've never seen before. There will be a lot of rooftop action." Some areas include the Statue of Liberty-like Lady Gotham,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



Anjelica Huston and Raul Julia head the Addams family

You've been Framed!

THIS IS A SHORT SURVEY OF MOVIES BASED ON COMIC STRIPS. ALL MAJOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ADAPTATIONS HAVE BEEN COVERED; A SELECTION OF FOREIGN TITLES ARE INCLUDED WHERE THEY ARE AVAILABLE IN THE UK OR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE, ALTHOUGH THIS SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED ANYWHERE NEAR A COMPREHENSIVE LISTING. WE'VE TRIED TO STRICTLY LIST ONLY THOSE CHARACTERS WHOSE ORIGIN WAS AS A COMIC STRIP, SO NO ENTRY WILL BE FOUND FOR BUCK ROGERS, THE SHADOW, CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT AND A HOST OF OTHERS WHOSE ORIGINS WERE ACTUALLY IN PULP MAGAZINES OR ON RADIO.

Note on timings: there is always a difference between cinema and video running times as video runs at 25 frames per second and cinema films at 24, effectively shortening a movie by about 1 minute in every 25. Times listed are cinema timings, but these may vary from one country to another (censorship, usually) or on tv (often cut to fit advertising slots or for showing pre-watershed). Those films known to be released on video are noted with a [V].

THE ADDAM'S FAMILY. American newspaper cartoon series created by Charles Addams for the *New Yorker* in the 1950s, later running as a successful tv series in 1964-66. *The Addam's Family* (1991). Dir Barry Sonnenfeld. Scr Caroline Thompson, Larry Wilson. St Anjelica Huston, Raul Julia, Christopher Lloyd, Dan Hedaya, Elizabeth Wilson, Judith Malina, Carel Struycken, Dana Ivey, Paul Benedict, Christina Ricci, Jimmy Workman, Christopher Hart, John Franklin, Tony Azito. Based closely on Charles Addams' original cartoons rather than the tv series

and starring the antithesis to wholesome American sit-com families, the film succeeded as a stylish, nicely acted homage at a basic level with Morticia (Huston) and Gomez (Julia) heading the kooky clan, but as movie entertainment left a lot to be desired - a half decent plot would have been nice rather than the thin connecting web here wherein a crooked lawyer uses a lookalike of Fester (Lloyd) to con the family out of their fortune. Nominated for an Academy Award for Best Costume Design. 99m. Cert PG. [V]. *Addam's Family Values* (1993). Dir Barry Sonnenfeld. Scr Paul Rudnick. St Angelica Huston, Raul Julia, Christopher Lloyd, Joan Cusack, Christina Ricci, Carol Kane, Jimmy Workman, Carel Struycken. More sit-com ghastliness which, unlike the first which desperately tried to spread the single joke over an hour forty, almost makes it with three jokes. Overall it's an improvement with Cusack's nanny, Debbie Jellinsky, a serial killer out to kill Fester (Lloyd), and Wednesday Addams (Ricci) and the other. Addams children sent off to camp where they become involved in a children's pageant which they suitably weird out. 94m. Cert-PG.

BARBARELLA. A space-hopping, bed-hopping (which earned her a banning), scantily clad heroine created by Jean-Claude Forest for the French *V-Magazine* in 1962. *Barbarella* (Italy/France, 1967). Dir Roger Vadim. Scr Terry Southern, Jean-Claude Forest, Roger Vadim, Vittorio Bonicelli, Brian Degas. Claude Brule, Tudor Gates, Clement Biddle Wood. St Jane Fonda, John Phillip Law, Anita Pallenberg, Milo O'Shea, David Hemmings, Marcel Marceau, Ugo Tognazzi, Claude Dauphin, Antonio Sabato, Veronique Vendell, Serge Marquand, Talitha Pol, Nino Muso, Sergio Ferrero,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

PRODUCTION HELL FROM P.27

PanAsian Town, Arkham Square, Arkham Asylum and the circus where Dick Grayson performs. There's also the Batman utility belt which will now include a Batarang, Batcuffs, clamps for climbing, a portable laser and a grappling hook gun. "Arkham Asylum is where we meet Two-Face at the beginning of the movie," Walker revealed. "The origins of Two-Face and The Riddler are incredibly economically told at the beginning of the movie. This movie will have much more Batman and much more action." The film is tentatively scheduled for June 1995 release.

BLACK CAT. First published in 1941, the title character was a Hollywood stunt woman who donned a revealing swimsuit and large black gloves and boots to fight crime. Sean Young was rumored to be taking the lead with John Paragon as director, although such rumours were denied. A script by Chris Parker and Michael Lucker has since been announced.

BLACK CROSS. Based on a Dark Horse character who first appeared in *Dark Horse Presents* #1 created by Chris Warner.

BLACK PANTHER (Columbia). *Dir* John Singleton. *St* Wesley Snipes. *Prd* Brad Weston, Bob Beitcher. Back in *CW* #22 we interviewed Snipes, who said at the time: "We haven't have a start date for [Black Panther] but I've seen the first thirty-four pages of the script and they are slammin'! It's being written by Terry Hase, who wrote the *Road Warrior* series [*Mad Max*]. The Black Panther will be the first black superhero for the major screen. It's a biggie. Everybody's excited about it." Snipes has since finished *Drop Zone*. To confuse matters, *The Black Panther* began filming in 1994 starring Mario Van Peebles, which has nothing to do with 'our' BP, but all to do with the 1960s terrorist group.

BLADE (New Line). *Dir* Ernest (Juice) Dickerson. *Scr* David Goyer. *Prd* Peter Frankfurt. From the Marvel character.

BLONDIE (Warner Bros). *Scr* Elisa Bell. *Prd* Wendy Finerman, Joel Silver. Based on Chic Young's classic newspaper strip.

CAGE. *Scr* Ron Friedman (supervising producer of the *Marvel Action Hour* animated series). *Prd* Ed Pressman. Friedman has said that a script is now completed for the former Power Man, Luke Cage, and a director is being sought.

CAPTAIN AMERICA. Marvel character with an already long cinema history is again under consideration.

CAPTAIN THUNDER AND BLUE BOLT. Was optioned by Paramount in 1993, based on the creation of Roy and Dann Thomas.



Christina Ricci here as Wednesday Addams

CASPAR (Amblin Entertainment/Universal). *Dir* Brad Silberling. *Scr* Sherri Stoner, Deanna Oliver, Amy Brenneman. *St* Christina Ricci, Bill Pullman, Cathy Moriarty, Eric Idle, Malachi Pearson, Joe Nipote, Brad Garrett, Joe Alaskey. *ExPrd* Gerald R. Molen, Jeffrey A. Montgomery. *Prd* Colin Wilson, Steven Spielberg. Principal photography has now wrapped in Los Angeles, and a Summer '95 release is scheduled. Amy Brenneman was added as Wendy (Ricci)'s mother. 12-year-old Malachi Pearson supplies the voice of Caspar, and the Ghostly Trio, Stretch, Stinky and Fatso also appear.

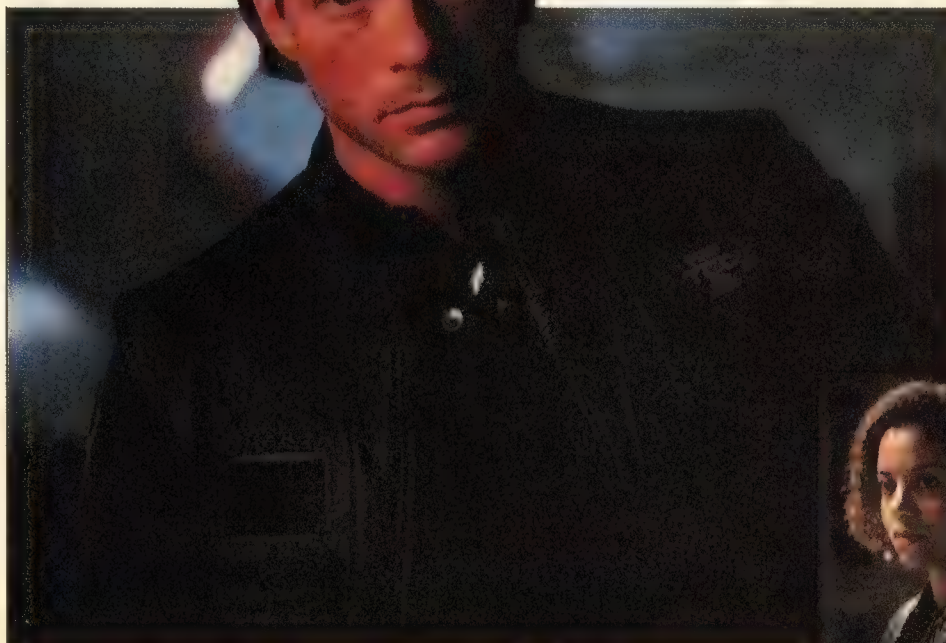
CATWOMAN (Warner). *Dir* Tim Burton. *Scr* Dan Waters. Michelle Pfeiffer will reprise her role from *Batman Returns*.

CEMETERY. Based on a Dark Horse character created by Mike Baron.

CONCRETE. *Scr* Larry Wilson, Paul Chadwick. *Prd* Lawrence Gordon. Based on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

When it comes to developing a comic strip into a feasible movie property, Mark Verheiden has the perfect background. In his early writing career he penned several optionable movie scripts, the 'best' (if that's the word - at least it was filmed) being *Terror Squad* (1987) which starred Chuck Connors, although even he would admit that the direct-to-video action flick didn't



exactly set Hollywood aflame. The experience was not so good: "Actually the experience was really bad. It was terrible, nothing was left of my original script and I said to myself 'If that's the movie business I don't know if I want to keep trying this'."

It was about that time that two young comic fans, Mike Richardson and Randy Stradley of the nascent Dark Horse Comics - approached him, he jumped at the chance to pen a comic book which could be his vision alone.

For Dark Horse, Portland-born Verheiden penned *The American*, a superhero with one eye on Truth, Justice and *The American Way*, the other on concessions: T-shirts, guest appearances and merchandising. It was an instant success and itself sold to Joel Silver - on the agreement that Verheiden himself would pen the script (the film was reported to be in turnaround in 1992, but the option has since run out).

Verheiden, instead, went on to turn licensed film characters into comic strips, beginning with the incredibly successful *Aliens* and *Predator* adaptations and sequels, plus a smattering of work for others; they're still his best known works in comic books, but to the outside world the name Mark Verheiden suddenly

Doing Time

STEVE HOLLAND TALKS TO MARK VERHEIDEN, THE WRITER OF WRITER OF THE AMERICAN, STALKER, ALIENS AND PREDATOR COMICS, WHOSE SCREEN WRITING CREDITS INCLUDE THE MASK AND THE FORTHCOMING TIME COP



appeared out of nowhere in the credits of *The Mask*: "The way I got involved in the movie was New Line had bought the rights and hired a writer named Michael Fallon to write the first draft," Mark reveals. "I thought he'd done a pretty good job, but [Mike Richardson and New Line] thought it hadn't captured the energy that the comic had. Mike Richardson fought pretty hard to have me come on and take a pass at it, so I did a re-write of Mike Fallon's draft where I added quite a few comedy bits, and enough of it stayed in for me to get a credit on the film. The Cuban Pete dance was mine, and I was the first guy to have the dog put the mask on and become Doggy Mask; one of the other main scenes I did was the one where he's in the park pulling all that stuff out of his pockets. Bits and pieces were picked out of my script and used in different spots in *The Mask* that you see."

"I did my draft back in the spring of 1991 and then the project just sort of stalled. They liked my draft, but they seemed to have trouble getting the other creative parts to come together. A couple of years later Chuck Russell came on to it and decided to work with Mike Werb, and they sprang off my draft and did another which became the movie."

Verheiden's full of praise for the finished product, although he cautiously begins with "If you find a writer who says he enjoys being re-written I'll show you a liar! I don't enjoy being re-written but I understand that it's part of the business. I've re-written other people so I'd be a bit of a hypocrite if I said you should never do it. There are things in my draft that I think are better than what they made, and things in their draft that were better than mine. What they really managed to do was they found someone who could be the Mask as we all envisaged him. That's the important thing."

If you've read the comics you'll know that the Mask has been toned down quite a bit, even "though it still contains more cartoon violence than you can wave a springy-headed mallet at. "They decided pretty early on that they wanted to soften the Mask character up a bit," concedes Mark. "The final movie you see is actually quite a bit softer than my draft. I don't think I actually had Stanley or *The Mask* killing anybody, but there was more violence. They

shot a couple of scenes that they cut from the movie at the last minute because they wanted it to be a more of a fun experience. There's a scene with the female reporter who turns on Stanley they shot in which she gets killed...in a funny way: she's pushed into the press that Stanley was hanging over and gets squished into a headline that says Reporter Dies In Freak Accident. They cut that because they thought it was just too strong. In a way it leaves an interesting loose end, but I've yet to hear anyone say 'Hey, what happened to the crooked female reporter?' I don't think anyone cares with the dog and everything going on!"

I don't know what happened at your cinema, but Milo (as played by Max) got most of the cheers on the opening night at our local Odeon, even more than Jim Carrey, of whom Mark says: "They shot The Mask last fall before Ace Ventura came out and I wasn't that familiar with Jim Carrey, so when they cast him I watched him in In Living Color, the tv show [shown here on Sky] and I just thought This guy is perfect! There's no way around saying it - absolutely perfect."

TIME COP

The third comic-based blockbuster of the year opens in the UK shortly, having already blasted to number one in the box-office charts in the States. Starring the Muscles from Brussels, Jean-Claude Van Damme, the beefy star of a score of straight-to-video action flicks and successful box-office hits Universal Soldier, Nowhere to Run and Hard Target.

The film opens in the present

where we meet a cop, Max Walker (Van Damme), and his wife (Mia Sara) who's horribly murdered in front of Max's eyes. Mark takes up the pitch: "Ten years later Max is now a Time Cop, a member of the Time Enforcement Commission which is an agency devoted to going back and stopping criminals from changing the past to alter the future, and in the course of chasing this sleazy politician whose played by Ron Silver who's trying to make a whole bunch of money by manipulating the stock market, and other things back in time. Max finds himself back in the same position again with his wife just prior to her murder. We establish that it's very much against the law to change time, even to save your own life, and the question is will he help her, can he help her, and can he stop this extremely evil politician? That's the basic plot."

Van Damme in the lead always guarantees a certain success, but recent outings which have tried to show Van-Damme's tender side (rather than the side of sirloin he was in his early movies) have fallen short of the mark.

"Maybe he's not had the best of luck with past material and only time will tell with Time Cop how things turn out commercially," is Mark's opinion. "I think he's a little underrated and the thing about Time Cop is that he's got a very good supporting cast. Ron Silver is just evil, Mia Sara is great as

his wife and Bruce McGill, who plays Van Damme's boss, is very funny, so he's got a very strong back-up. I think he shows a side that maybe you haven't seen that much from him before because we really tried to create a genuine romance in the film which is still strong and action-ful enough. I think he pulled it off very well." Which is maybe what Van Damme needs to break out of the pigeonhole he's kick-boxed his way into.

"You need to have some kind of

"YOU NEED TO HAVE SOME KIND OF STORY TO HANG FIGHT SCENES OFF"

story to hang fight scenes off of and y'know, I'm not trying to fool anybody -

Time Cop has fights, and they're pretty brutal. I've seen it a couple of time here with audiences and they cheer a couple of times - Van Damme's a remarkable athlete on top of whatever else he does, I mean he does some pretty amazing physical stunts. You'll see it when they start advertising the trailers, but there's a bit where he does a two-legged straddle between two kitchen cupboards where he's just hanging by his heels, spread-eagled over the floor, and it's an amazing-looking stunt and it gets wows every time from the audience. Here's a movie that's full of special effects and sometimes I think the biggest wows come from seeing a guy who's obviously a real physical thing doing these gymnastic stunts."

Time Cop had a double birth as both a movie scenario and comic book. "What happened there was that Mike Richardson and I got together back in 1989 and Mike had the basic idea for Time Cop who was a cop who went back in time to try to save his wife from being murdered, and we developed that together into the plot that eventually became the movie; at the same time we wanted to develop it as a comic book project, so there's a serialised story that appeared in the first three issues of Dark Horse Comics that has the Max Walker character, but it's a totally different story - another adventure of Walker's life as a policeman. We were hedging our bets a little bit. And in fact we're still going to do it as a comic book; in fact we're negotiating right now to do a mini-series, an all new story about Max."

MOVIES ON PAPER?

Since he's in the hot seat and has adapted comics to movies and movies to comics, Mark's the perfect choice to test out the nitty-gritty question about the difference between a comic script and a film script. We've seen it said that comics are like films with an unlimited budget...

"Actually it goes both ways: there are things you can do in comics that you can't do in films, and things you can do with films that you can't do with comics. I think if you're working in the action or science fiction genres what you quickly realise is that you can't do nearly as much action in comics because in comics you have to show each aspect of the move. Jack Kirby was an expert at getting a whole bunch of power across in a



PRODUCTION HELL FROM P.28

Chadwick's excellent comic character who debuted in *Dark Horse Presents* #1. Wilson & Chadwick's script has been around a couple of years now.

CRYING FREEMAN. Dir C. Gans. Scr Brian Yuzna (see *Zen Intergalactic Ninja*).

DAREDEVIL. Dir Chris Columbus. Was supposedly to be Columbus' preferred choice over *Fantastic Four* but now seems to be on the back burner.

DEADWORLD. Dir Mark Pavia. Scr Pavia, Jack O'Donnell. Prd O'Donnell.

DR STRANGE (Savoy). Another long-running "may happen" movie. Wes Craven attached as director and scriptwriter. Producers are Bill Todman Jr. and Joel Simon.

DOOM'S IV (Amblin). Scr Nick Sagan. Prd Rob Liefeld. Has been with Amblin for a year, and the latest news has Nick (son of Carl) Sagan writing the script. The comic version recently appeared.

ELEKTRA: ASSASSIN. Optioned by Oliver Stone.

FANTASTIC FOUR. Dir Oley Sassoon. Scr Craig Nevius. St Alex Hyde-White, Jay Underwood, Joseph Culp, Rebecca Staab, Michael Bailey, Carl Ciarfilio, Kat Green, Ian Trigger, George Gaynes. Produced by Roger Corman's Concorde Films, and shot over December and January 1992/3. The plot involved the origins of the FF - Reed Richards (Mr. Fantastic, played by Hyde-White), Sue Storm (Staab), Johnny Storm (The Human Torch, Underwood) and Ben Grimm (Bailey) whose alter-ego, The Thing was played by stuntman Ciarfilio - and their first encounter with Doctor Doom (Culp). At the last minute, when the film was all set for release, Neue Constantin decided to shelve the film in the face of a reported Chris Columbus big-budget FF feature. It is unlikely that the film will ever see the light of day, even on video.

FANTASTIC FOUR (Fox) Dir Chris Columbus. The *Home Alone* and *Mrs Doubtfire* director recently signed a contract with Fox and was offered the FF as an incentive. Rumour recently indicated that he would actually prefer *Daredevil*, but the FF movie seems to be back on.

FAUST (Genre Productions). Dir Stuart Gordon (director of *Re-Animator* (1985), *From Beyond* (1986) and the remake of *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1990)). Scr David Quinn. Prd Michael Burnett, Ted Chalmers.

FIST OF THE NORTHSTAR. No information other than it's based on the manga *Hokuto No Ken* by Buronson & Tetsuo Hara which also spawned a long-running Japanese tv series (see CW #28 for video review).

FLAMING CARROT. No information.

GHOST RIDER (Savoy). Scr David Goyer. At one time this was in development at New Line, but seems to have changed hands. George Kasmotos (*Rambo*) may direct. It should be noted that the movie *Ghost Riders* which began shooting in Colorado in September has no connection with the Marvel character.

HATE. Scr Peter Bagge. Bagge's main character in *Hate*, Buddy Bradley, was originally the star - along with his family - of the earlier *Neat Stuff*, launched in 1985.

INCREDIBLE HULK (Universal). Scr John Turman. Prd Gale Anne Hurd (of *Aliens* and *T2*).

IRON MAN. Marvel character, currently under consideration. At one point was under consideration by Francis Ford Coppola's Zoetrope company with Albert Cox as possible director, then as a Universal film with Stuart Gordon directing.

JUDGE DREDD (Cinergi Pictures Entertainment Inc/Edward R. Pressman Productions). Dir Danny Cannons. Scr John Fasano (latest re-write by Steven E. De Souza). St Sylvester Stallone, Armand Assante, Diane Lane, Rob Schneider, Joan Chen, Jurgen Prochnow, Balthazar Getty, Scott Wilson, Joanna Miles, Max Von Sydow. ExPrd Andy Vajna, Edward R. Pressman. Prd Charles Lippincott, Beau Marks. See feature this issue.

L.I.L. ABNER. Prd Ernest Chambers.

LIEUT BLUEBERRY (Eclectic Films). Jean

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

very few panels, but if you hired someone today to do a comic book version of the fight sequence from the end of *Predator* that would probably be 45 pages just trying to get every beat of that fight in because you have to show the set-up, you have to show the reaction, you have to show the aftermath, you have to show the guy getting up, you have to show him fighting back, all that sort of thing. In a movie all you say is "Arnold punches Predator - he flies". So movies are much easier to get across a sense of action.

"Comics on the other hand are much easier to get that sort of literary quality; it's much easier to get across ideas in comics, I think, because you can do inner monologues, you can do thought balloons, and characters can carry a lot more dialogue in a panel that would seem really talky in a film. You can have people say things in a more up-front way because as a literary form you're more used to seeing it that way. It doesn't have to be all conversational to work. You can even have different point of view captions like in *Batman: Year One* where Frank Miller had...three points of view? You try and do that in a movie you'd have the films' executives heads spinning: 'I don't know who's talking now?', not to mention that it would confuse the audience.

"They're actually very different.

because comics are not movies on paper; they're their own unique artform. I tell you, a great read is Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* because it really does explain the difference between the forms and explains the strengths that comics have, and in some respects the weaknesses they have in terms of motion and things, but...I don't know, I love both mediums a lot and I always try to work to the strengths of both."

And we'll certainly be seeing more of his work in both comics and movies:

"In movies I've got a project for Sam Raimi called *Atlas* which I'm working on right now which is another futuristic story about a fascist world where a guy who's served under the boot his whole life manages to ferment a rebellion against his so-called masters. A fun project, I'm trying to project a bit of fun into that one.

"And I've just done a re-write of a project called *Virus* - which not the *Dark Horse Virus*, yet another virus for Universal - and that's sort of about a computer virus, and I've just signed a two-picture deal with Universal after that, the first project is with Mike Richardson and that's an original that's going to be called *AI and Gene*, a *Mask*-like fantasy. Kind of a wild-man fantasy again - a fun movie. The second one is TBA - to be arranged. We've arranged parts of it, but not what it is yet."

What happened to the script for *The American*? "I did the script for Joel Silver back in 1990 and finally the option ran out and I got the character back. I still have some hope of trying to fit that up somewhere, so that's sort of there, and in comics I'm doing this *Time Cop* mini-series, and actually I have a project with Archie Goodwin, a *Legends of the Dark Knight* story that I've been trying to get to for a year or two now...and that's enough!"

A few films here...a few

comics there... "It keeps us in chips," says Mark, and laughs. **CW**

STEVE HOLLAND's 4th book was recently published in the USA, a study of British pulp science fiction co-written with Philip Harbottle. If his accounting is right this should be his 75th interview performed for *Comic World* (not counting news items).

CARR

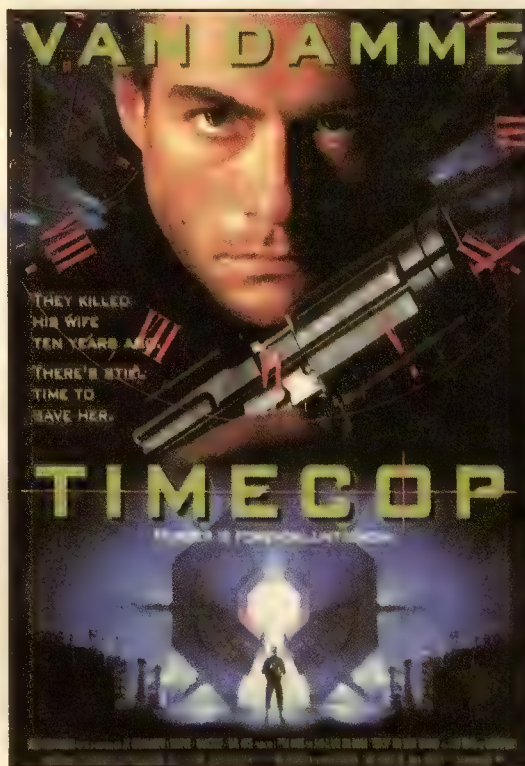
HE'S THE LATEST COMEDY SUPERSTAR, A MAN WHOSE UNIQUE COMIC TALENTS INCLUDE A GIFT FOR MIMICRY COUPLED WITH EXTRAORDINARY PHYSICAL FLEXIBILITY AND ENERGY. TONY EARNSHAW CHECKS OUT JIM CARREY AND HIS ANARCHIC ADVENTURE, THE MASK.

Jim Carrey is the human equivalent of the goose that laid the golden egg. He's the living embodiment of the tagline from *The Mask* - "From Zero to Hero" - coming from practically nowhere to take the world by storm with his zany humour, rubber features and wacky antics. What's more, this wild-eyed Canadian, described by some as a cross between Robin Williams and Jerry Lewis, is poised to knock Williams from the top spot as Earth's kookiest comedian.

Carrey has already bagged the role of *The Riddler* in *Batman Forever* - a role which many predicted would go to Williams, and which Williams himself was interested in taking on - and after the success of *The Mask*, looks set to blaze a trail of energetic comedy he has made his own.

Quite simply, the boy can do no wrong.

When *The Mask* opened in Britain on August 19, 32-year-old Carrey had only one other major movie behind him. That one movie, however, was *Ace Ventura - Pet Detective*, one of America's biggest box office surprises of 1994,



Maybe other people find it easy, but I actually have a little trouble bouncing back and forth. I get used to one writing form, and when I try to switch back you kind of forget, 'Oh, you can't do that here'.

"I've heard the analogy that says comics are just movies on paper, but I think that's very facile, very wrong

EY ON JIM

which raked in nearly \$40 million in its first three weeks.

The movie's success was undoubtedly down to Carrey, a renowned joker in the States who had crawled his way up the precarious ladder of success rung by rung. He began his career as

a teenager, performing in Toronto's famous comedy club, Yuk Yuks; within two years he had conquered Canada's club circuit, and at 19 he upped sticks for Los Angeles where, like Robin Williams and Eddie Murphy before him, he blitzed the stand-up comedy clubs.

"When I first started I was 17 and I used to bring my father down with me all the time," Carrey revealed. "Then at some point I had to say 'Dad, I've got hair on my nuts. Go home!'"

Over the next ten years he built up a solid base on America's thriving comedy circuit, basking in the glow of Williams, Murphy and Dan Ackroyd, all of whom had made the jump from comedy to movies. It was only a matter of time before

Carrey did the same, and by the mid-'80s he was

appearing in features regularly: with the then relatively unknown Liam

Neeson he appeared in the final (to date) Clint Eastwood/Dirty Harry movie *The Dead Pool*. He worked for Francis Ford Coppola, Turner and Cage on the time travel romance *Peggy Sue Got Married* and was in *Earth Girls Are Easy* with former husband and wife team Jeff Goldblum and Geena Davis.

But it was tv that proved to be his making. Carrey's series *In Living Color* gave him free rein to exercise his creativity, and he didn't disappoint. His outrageous brand of switched-on,

over-the-top humour came up with the controversial Fire Marshall Bill and the husky-voiced, steroid-crazy female bodybuilder, Vera De Milo.

"When I started it was like 'I gotta come up with characters,' so I went to the creepiest, darkest place in my mind and wrenched them out

adventure to adventure and, when things get too hot, mysteriously vanish.

Carrey himself knew *The Mask* gave him the opportunity to give full vent to his id by playing not just one character far removed from his real self, but two: "It was one of those



of there," says Carrey. The series was a smash hit and proved to be the launching point for Carrey's big-time movie career when Ace Ventura writer Tom Shadyac spotted him while searching for someone to play the pet detective.

By the time Ace Ventura was smashing the box-office, Carrey had already completed *The Mask*, a big screen adaptation of Dark Horse Comics' dark character which, at least in the comic strip, happily killed people by the coffinload. In the movie, things were a

mite different, with the action geared towards a predominantly young audience.

The comic strip *Mask* was essentially a cross between Steve Ditko's *The Creeper* and Batman's old foe, *The Joker*. He can change his appearance from

times in your life where you go 'Well, I just gotta take a chance'. I'd played it safe before and nothing comes of that. So I decided to go crazy. I think it's because I'm kind of animated. I am kind of a walking Tex Avery cartoon," he grins.

The movie features Carrey as timid clerk Stanley Ipkiss. Now Stanley is the kind of guy we all desperately want NOT to be: he's a nice guy, a loser, and he never gets

the girl. He has doormat written all over his face. Polite, likeable, unfailingly good-humoured, he invites a put-down merely by breathing.

Ipkiss is the eternal fallguy. "[Stanley is] more my father than me, I think," says Carrey. "My father's the type

of guy who would just give you the shirt off his back."

Things change when young Stan finds an ancient mask floating in the



PRODUCTION HELL FROM P.30

(Moeblus) Giraud's classic western was with Intermedia Films who were in pre-production in 1990 with a script by Philip Wohlseter & Coby Sheldt and due to film in Mexico. Little has been heard since.

MACHINE (Universal). Prd Lawrence Gordon. Based on Dark Horse comic.

MAI THE PSYCHIC GIRL. Prd Ron & Russell Mael. Based on the manga series by Ryochi Ikegami. Was reported to be a possible Tim Burton project, but no director is currently attached. The last known version of the script was by Larry Wilson & Caroline (Edward Scissorhands) Thompson.

THE MARK (Paramount). Scr Will Wisner. Rob Liefeld development with Tom Cruise, a superhero/SF/fantasy film originally written by Wisner, with Nick Sagan rewriting.

THE MASK II (New Line). St Jim Carrey. Carrey started filming Dumb and Dumber in June '94, and will apparently reprise his role as Stanley Ipikiss/The Mask next summer after finishing a second *Ace Ventura*.

MEN IN BLACK (Columbia). Based on Malibu Comics series by Bill Spengler.

THE MIGHTY THOR. Marvel character currently under consideration.

MODESTY BLAISE (Miramax). Dir Russell Mulcahy. Prd Lawrence Gordon. Creator Peter O'Donnell will want strong control of this one after the mess the last film turned into.

PEANUTS (Warner). Scr/Prd John Hughes. Based on the long-running newspaper strip by Charles Schultz.

THE PHANTOM (Robert Evans Co./Village Roadshow Pictures). Dir Joe Dante. Scr Jeffrey Boam. ExPrd Graham Burke, Greg Coote, Peter Sjoquist. Prd Robert Evans (Silver), Mike Finnell. Was due to begin shooting in Australia in September, but reportedly delayed until next spring. Dante (Gremlins, Matinee) was reported as looking for an unknown to play the title role.

PITBULLS (Universal). Prd Lawrence Gordon. Based on Dark Horse Comic's Greatest Worlds series.

PLASTIC MAN (Amblin Entertainment/ Warner Bros). Dir Bryan Spicer. Scr Larry Wilson. Lead will probably go to a newcomer, although the usual (and unusual) gamut of names have been linked, including Tim Robbins, Bruce Willis, Michael Jackson and Paul (Pee-Wee Herman) Reubens. Steven Spielberg was said to be fully behind the project, although little has been heard in the last two years.

PRINCE VALIANT (Nue Constantin). Scr M. Beckner, Roger Kumble, Marlene King.

THE PULSE. Not a comic - yet - but a creation of Todd McFarlane currently with Quincy Davis Entertainment, to be produced by Quincy Jones and David Salzman. Warner Brothers will distribute.

PUNISHER. Recent rumours had kickboxing blonde Sophia Crawford possibly starring as a female Punisherette (following the current comic book), but at the moment there are no plans for a new Punisher movie.

REID FLEMING (Warner). No information.

RICHIE RICH (Silver Pictures) in association with Davis Entertainment. Dir Donald Petrie. Scr Jim Jennewein, Tom S. Parker. St Macaulay Culkin, John Larroquette, Edward Herrmann, Christine Ebersole, Jonathan Hyde, Michael McShane, Chelcie Ross, Mariangelo Pino. ExPrd Dan Kolsrud, Jon Shapiro, Joe Bilella. Prd Joel Silver, John Davis. CoPrd Jackie George. This is another film that has already a little history behind it. An earlier script by Neil Tolkin was due to shoot with Fred Savage as the poor little rich boy. The film that eventually emerged was shot in North Carolina and Chicago, beginning principal shooting in May. Culkin was off the project at one point due to his father's contractual control over choice of director - neither John G. Avlsen (*Rocky*) or Joe Johnston suited his precocious golden-haired 'Good Son'. Culkin's \$8m price tag may have also nixed him at one point, but all matters were resolved and the film should be released for Christmas 1994.

SANDMAN. Presumably Warner...but no information available. There is talk of a Sandman radio show for Radio One with Dirk Maggs producing.

SERGEANT ROCK. Dir/Scr John Milius. Prd Joel Silver. Long-time production hell feature

river. Trying it on he s violently transformed into a maniac and mischievous alter-ego with tombstone teeth, staring eyes and a bald, green-skinned head.

If Carrey's dad was Stanley Ipikiss, then Carrey himself is definitely The Mask: "As soon as I was made up, I became the Mask. I could feel the character just burst through me. Basically it was a joygasm, and that's what The Mask is; he's just pure adrenaline," he stresses.

But the character also passed on shades of his dark side to Carrey who felt more than a little schizophrenic because "on one level, I'm this sweet innocent guy, and on another level I'm this wound-up ball of spontaneous combustion."

Though the heart of the movie rests with Jim Carrey, much of The Mask's strangeness and inventiveness comes courtesy of those extremely talented chaps at Industrial Light and Magic, the special effects wizards who capture the anarchic craziness of those familiar Chuck Jones cartoons. The vital point to remember, of course, is that The Mask is not a cartoon - he's a live

action character who can behave like a cartoon.

"Anything that you have seen in those cartoons we mimic," says Special Effects Supervisor and ILM Senior Producer Clint Goldman. "Carrey appears to dodge bullets,, his eyes bug out, his chin drops to the floor, his head turns into a wolf's and he lets out a big wolf whistle. The beauty about Jim Carrey is that he can go pretty far - but there are things he doesn't have the

ability to do, so he goes as far as he can, and then ILM take it that much further.

"For example, Jim can do weird things with his mouth, but he can't take his jaw, drop it all the way down to the ground and have his tongue roll out on the table!"

Director Charles Russell agrees: "I don't think the audience can see where Jim Carrey ends and the effects begin."

The Mask is a highly original movie and highly entertaining but (and, don't you know, there's always a 'but') whenever the title character is missing from the screen, the movie slows drastically and loses that essential element of mischievous tomfoolery.



Still, this oddball Jekyll and Hyde story has already been earmarked for a sequel, as has *Ace Ventura*, for which Carrey has already signed, so the world's newest and brightest funny man looks set to be one busy cookie in the months to come.

His next film, incidentally, is *Dumb and Dumber* which he will follow up with *Batman Forever*, a far cry from the projects producers were offering him in the early days.

Success is not without its downside, however. Carrey recently admitted that his marriage has foundered, and blamed his ego entirely: "When I'd been on stage with an audience eating out of my hand, I didn't want to come home and have to take out the garbage," he revealed.

In Cannes to promote *The Mask* this summer, Carrey was asked to describe the plot of the movie. His answer was typically off the wall...

"Well, I'd like to, but I'd much rather talk about Gerard Depardieu because he's everywhere! He is France! If you see a giant crowd just screaming and stuff...Gerard Depardieu! He doesn't even have to be there; you just mention his name and people o 'Zut alors! Magnifique! Gerard Depardieu!"

Keep taking the pills, Jim. Just keep taking the pills... **CW**

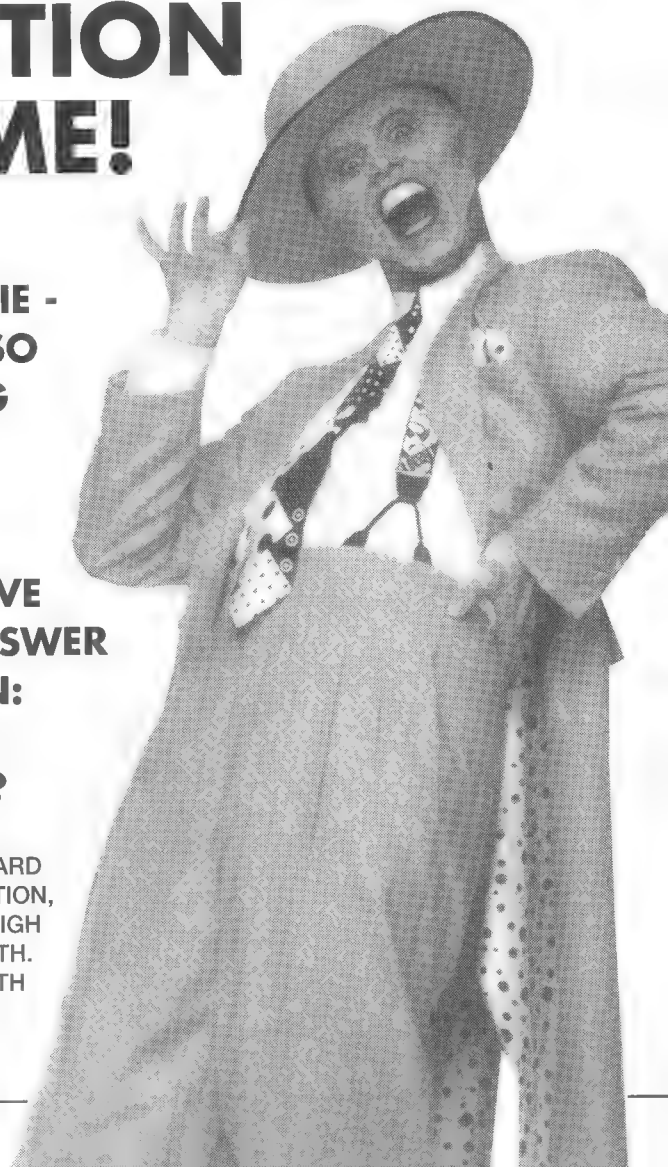
TONY EARNSHAW works for a local Yorkshire newspaper. He also writes regularly for *Impact* magazine.

COMPETITION TIME!



YOU'VE SEEN THE MOVIE - READ THE FEATURES - SO HOW ABOUT OWNING THE T-SHIRT AND THE GRAPHIC NOVELS? WE'VE FIVE SETS OF MASK GOODIES TO GIVE AWAY IF YOU CAN ANSWER THIS SIMPLE QUESTION: WHAT'S THE NAME OF STANLEY IPKISS' DOG?

WRITE YOUR ANSWERS ON A POSTCARD AND SEND THEM TO MASK COMPETITION, COMIC WORLD, CASTLE HOUSE, 97 HIGH STREET, COLCHESTER, ESSEX CO1 1TH. ENTRIES MUST BE IN BY MONDAY 14TH NOVEMBER. USUAL COMPETITION RULES APPLY.



YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED! CONTINUED



Barbarella star Jane Fonda

Franco Gula. From a script that was slowly re-written to death (by eight writers), Vadim tried to create a grand spectacle from relatively cheap sets and effects - admirably photographed by Claude Renoir - stretching the budget as taut as Fonda's clothing. She spends much of her time in wide-eyed bafflement searching for a missing scientist and saving the 40th century from O'Shea's plans of destruction using a ray gun. Vadim used the film to turn real-life wife Fonda into a sex star, lingering on her

in the 1920s.

BARRY MCKENZIE. Created in 1967 by Aussie comedian Barry Humphries for *Private Eye* with art by Nicholas Garland. **The Adventures of Barry McKenzie** (Australia, 1972). *Dir* Bruce Beresford. *Scr* Barry Humphries, Beresford. *St* Barry Crocker, Humphries, Peter Cook, Spike Milligan, Dennis Price, Avice Landon, Dick Bentley, Joan Bakewell, William Rushton. Sex mad, beer swilling Aussie McKenzie (Crocker) comes to the UK for various encounters, lots of Oz slang and Humphries appears as Bazza McKenzie's aunt, Edna Everidge. Uneven, uninspired comedy. 114m. Cert 18. **Barry McKenzie Holds His Own** (Australia, 1974). *Dir* Bruce Beresford. *St* Crocker, Humphries, Donald Pleasence, Dick Bentley, Tommy Trinder, Ed Devereaux, Frank Windsor, Deryck Guyler, Arthur English, Louis Negin, Paul Humpolezt. Crocker returns as McKenzie and his twin brother who are kidnapped and taken to Transylvania when Aunt Edna is mistaken for Queen Elizabeth. 93m. Cert 18. [V].

BATMAN. Created by Bob Kane and Bill Finger for National Comics, first appearing in 1939. **Batman** (1943; serial, 15ch). *Dir* Lambert Hillyer. *Scr* Victor McLeod, Leslie Swabacker, Harry Fraser. *St* Lewis Wilson, Douglas Croft, J. Carrol Naish, William Austin, Shirley Patterson, Charles Middleton. Batman (Wilson) and Robin (Croft) try to stop Japanese-backed Dr. Daka (Naish) from stealing radium with the aid of an army of electronically controlled zombies. The dynamic duo discover Daka's headquarters (complete with hidden alligator pit) behind an amusement park.

Jnr. St Adam West, Burt Ward, Cesar Romero, Frank Gorshin, Burgess Meredith, Lee Meriwether, Alan Napier, Neil Hamilton, Madge Blake, Reginald Denny, Stafford Repp, Milton Frome, Gil Perkins, Dick Crockett. Based on the camped up tv series with West and Ward reviving their roles to battle ("Pow!", "Zap!") four criminal masterminds whose plan involves dehydrating the bodies of United Nations representatives, reducing them to dust. Brilliant whimsy - classic scenes include Batman fighting a rubber shark and trying to dispose of a bomb on a crowded pier and not being able to bring himself to drop it over the side because of a family of ducks swimming underneath. 105m. Cert U. [V]. **Batman** (1989). *Dir* Tim Burton. *Scr* Sam Hamm & Warren Skarren. *St* Michael Keaton, Jack Nicholson, Kim Basinger, Robert Wuhl, Pat Hingle, Billy Dee Williams, Michael Gough, Jack Palance, Jerry Hall, Lee Wallace. Burton's gothic extravaganza is currently the top grossing comic strip adaptation of all time taking over \$150m. As a piece of gothic melodrama it had enough style to outwit the public, and the bravura of casting Keaton against all critical derision was, in retrospect, not as bad a move as everyone thought: his Bruce Wayne is appealingly naive and his immobile costume would have been a nightmare to any actor other than Marty Feldman. But as a Batman movie it fails to deliver what Burton promised the post-Dark Knight generation fans, relying on startling design (by Anton Furst who helped win the film an Academy Award for Best Art Direction), an over-the-top villain (Nicholson's kinetic performance as the Joker no doubt spurred by the percentage he was receiving), and a plot full of gaping holes large enough to drive the Batmobile through. The Joker steals every scene from the moment he is

Michelle Pfeiffer, Christopher Walken, Michael Gough, Michael Murphy, Cristi Conaway, Andrew Bryniarski. More post-modern gothic from Burton this time with the Penguin (a foul, fish-eating DeVito), Selina Kyle/Catwoman (a slinky schizoid Pfeiffer) and evil tycoon Max Shreck (underplayed by wild-haired Walken). The characters themselves demand a hokey plot, which is exactly what they get, the Penguin - seen in a prologue being disposed by his distraught parents (one of whom is Pee-Wee Herman) - comes back to woo the population, kill their first born sons, and blow up Gotham with rockets attached to his vast underground army of penguins. Ditzzy Kyle is Shreck's secretary who accidentally uncovers a poorly explained scheme to store energy in a giant capacitor, is killed by her boss, revived by cats and sews herself a natty one-piece S&M costume. Her love/hate relationship with Batman/Bruce Wayne is the sole drive for her character. The film wins with its visuals and its pace, and the interplay between costumed characters. 126m. Cert 15. [V].

BLACKHAWK. American hero, created by Wil Eisner and Chuck Chuidera in 1941 to battle Hitler and stereotypical Nazi schemes. **Blackhawk** (1952; serial, 15ch). *Dir* Spencer Bennet. *St* Kirk Alyn.

BLONDIE. American syndicated newspaper strip created in 1930 by Murat 'Chic' Young starring Blondie, a flapper pursued by the bumbling Dagwood Bumstead. They married and Blondie became the level-headed head of the Bumstead household, always digging Dagwood out of trouble (lots of which she had earlier buried him in). The series ran to 28 episodes with much the same cast, and with a degree of continuity between shows - Baby Dumpling (Simms), for



opening shot strip-tease, regularly stalling the plot for the sales pitch eroticism. Semi-cult status seems to have turned this into a classic beyond its actual content. 98m. Cert 15. [V].

BARNEY GOOGLE. Began life as an unnamed supporting character in Billy De Beck's 'Married Life' newspaper strip, Google was first thus named in 'Take Barney Google F'Instance' which began as a sporting cartoon in 1919 in the *Chicago Herald-Examiner*; Google developed into a pint-sized, top-hatted sports fanatic (horse owner, fight manager, et al); the strip continued many years after De Beck's death in 1942. Google starred in a series of movie shorts

As with most of these cliffhangers, a hilarious effort in retrospect. **The New Adventures of Batman and Robin** (1949; serial, 15ch). *Dir* Spencer Bennet. *Scr* George H. Plympton. *St* Robert Lowery, Johnny Duncan, Jane Adams, Lyle Talbot, Ralph Graves, Don C. Harvey. Rather poorer sequel with the Dynamic Duo (Lowery & Duncan) against The Wizard (Talbot) on the loose in Gotham with a ray gun which can stop all electrical motors. He's determined to destroy the city. **Batman** (1966). *Dir* Leslie Martinson. *Scr* Lorenzo Semple

Three faces of Batman



pushed into a pick 'n' mix vat of chemicals,

and the film is well supported by Basinger as photographer (pronounced 'love interest') Vicki Vale and Gough as the perfect butler, Alfred. 126m. Cert 15. [V]. **Batman Returns** (1992). *Dir* Tim Burton. *Scr* Daniel Waters & Sam Hamm. *St* Michael Keaton, Danny DeVito,

instance grows up, goes to school in the fourth film, Cookie is born in the eleventh - even Daisy has pups in the twelfth. A few future stars slipped into the series: Rita Hayworth, Glenn Ford, Robert Sterling, Jeff Bridges all had parts. All were directed by Frank Strayer unless otherwise noted and generally his are the best; the series certainly started to lose steam after a while, extending many a stale joke, and the series now can only

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PRODUCTION HELL FROM P.32

which crops up every now and then (it was supposed to shoot in 1991) with various names attached, including Stallone, Schwarzenegger, Willis, and most other action heroes. David Webb Peoples (Unforgiven) wrote the first script, and Willis was always the favourite choice, but it was later announced (1993) that Willis had re-written the script to star Schwarzenegger. Renny Harlin was mooted to be director at that point.

SHE-HULK. Italian movie, starring Brigitte Nielsen (ex-Mrs Stallone).

SIN CITY. Perfect film noir material, currently under negotiation. Frank Miller's experiences on *RoboCop 2* and *3* (see CW #22) may make him want to take more control of script and production.

SPAWN. Todd MacFarlane is in discussion with New Line Cinema.

SPEED RACER (Warner). Dir Albert Proyas. Scr Jonathan F. Lawton (*Pretty Woman*, *Under Siege*). At one time *Superman* director Richard Donner was due to helm, but will now act as producer. Patrick Read Johnson (*Spaced Invaders*) was also attached, but the job now seems to be with Proyas (*The Crow*).

SPIDER-MAN (Lightstorm Entertainment/Carolco Pictures). Dir/Scr/Prod James Cameron. The latest incarnation of Marvel's character should go into preproduction in February 1995 for 1996 release, with the film to be shot in either Mexico or England. The film already has an interesting history which dates back to an option taken out by Roger Corman in 1983; the rights lapsed in 1985 and were picked up by Cannon - owned by Menahem Golan - who subsequently sued New World Pictures (Marvel's owners and the financial backers of the Corman project) in 1988 for obstructing the movie; Stan Lee was later quoted as saying that "[Golan]'s been buying scripts and I've been rejecting them. Finally, I said 'Look instead of you continually getting these stories and they're no good, I'll get a writer to do the screenplay.' I wrote the story, got somebody to do the screenplay, he loved it, I love it. The only thing that bothers me is that if Menahem loves it too, can it really be as

good as I think it is?"

Golan subsequently sold Cannon and bought 21st Century, whose finances couldn't cope with a big-budget movie. In 1990 James Cameron was first linked to the movie, and 21st Century sold the rights to Carolco; then, in 1992, 21st Century were suing Credit

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

PETE TAYLOR TACKLES KEV WALKER ON HIS ROLE IN THE JUDGE DREDD MOVIE



Los Angeles is one of those places that sounds good until you've actually been there and seen it in real life. Hollywood and Vine is no more than a trash filled street corner; the only people who go there are hookers and tourists, but it has the glitter of movie-land attachment that puts it top of the list of places for outsiders to visit.

Kev Walker is of the opinion that the movie industry itself suffers from the same problem. "I think it's like the comic industry, actually: very glamorous until you actually start working in it.

"To be honest, I didn't like Los Angeles at all - but then again I didn't get to see much of it. It was six days a week work, a lot of 12 hour days working very late

every night, and basically on the seventh day I rested," and jokingly adds, "as most gods tend to do. Most of my spare time was spent vegetating in a dingy hotel room with beer, crisps and a fat tv in front of my fat body. That was it for flying out to an exotic location!"

He was in L.A. to help with the pre-production of *Judge Dredd*:

the bike - in fact the bike's pretty close to one of my final paintings which is quite nice to see.

"No construction was done at that time. Once it had got past the initial painting design stage everything was moved lock, stock and barrel to Shepperton when all the 3-D side of it was started. Nothing was made in America at all, although just as I left [in November 1993] they got someone to start work on the helmet because it was one of those things we found impossible to do in two-dimensions; you could draw it from one angle but it was one of those things you had to work on in 3-D. They got a model of Stallone's head.

"That's one of the major problems: you actually look at Dredd in the comics and he's not a real human figure. You start trying to put those dimensions of the costume onto a real human figure and you run into trouble. Nobody has shoulders that wide! He's like two people, a very stylised character, and the way they're working on the film is to make it look real and not like a comic. Batman was done in a very stylised way to suit the character; it was very dark, which fitted. Judge Dredd is being played as a straight science fiction film, and a lot of the quirkiness in the bike and the costume had to come out purely to make them work in that set-up. It's being played straight. Dredd isn't going to try to be funny, which should make a lot of people happy. He's not going to be done like a cartoon; the humour will come from everyone else because Dredd is the ultimate straight man. He's the butt of all jokes, and as long as he doesn't know he's the butt he's quite happy.

"So everything had to be

Here Comes the JUDGE

The Movie which is promising to be one of the blockbusters of next summer. Originally announced with a budget of \$40 million, that has since risen to \$65m as names were added to the cast list and - not unrelated - Sylvester Stallone's *Cliffhanger* and *Demolition Man* both became box-office hits. Stallone has been attached to the role of Judge Dredd for years and was talking about the movie as if he were confirmed as early as 1989 - in fact Stallone and Dredd were inexorably linked way back in 1983 when the year's Judge Dredd Annual slipped a cartoon Judges helmet over Sly's photogenic features as part of a feature on who should play the part if a movie was

to be made! The word came officially in June 1993: Stallone had copped the part as the future law-enforcer (and if you think that's a bad pun, I can have no mercy: the *Daily Star* announced ASly gets Dreddy to play Judge!).

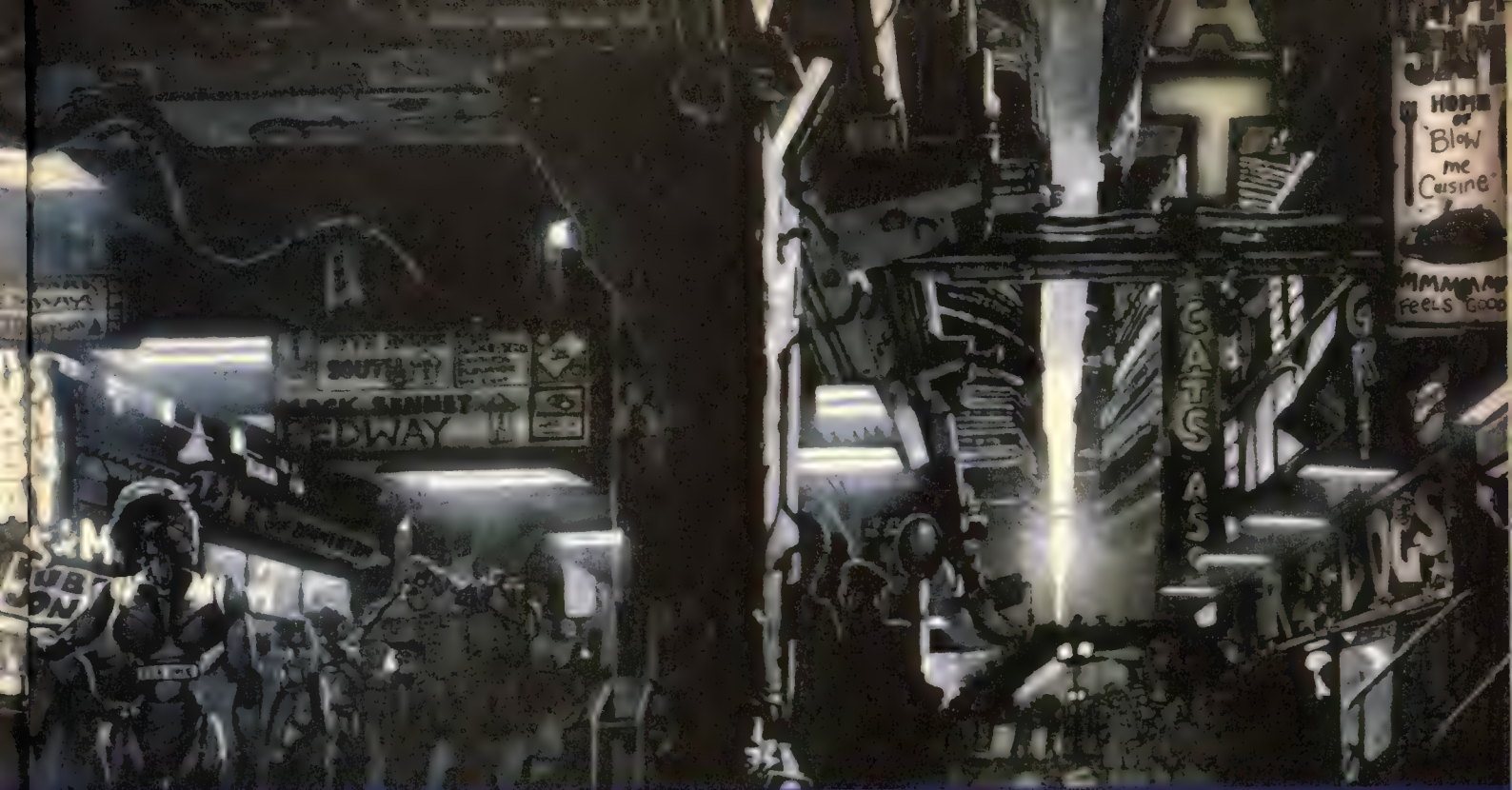
The film, which finally began its 17-week shoot on August 3rd in Shepperton, was in pre-production long before any stars could even dream of standing before a camera. Charles Lippincott, one of the executive producers of the film was

dreaming of a Dredd movie back in 1978. In 1993, other dreamers were brought in to turn ideas into reality, amongst them Kev who was flown to L.A. to spend three months as a 'sketch artist'. Whatever the hell that is. "I think it's a way for the production company to say AHe's a sketch artist, he gets paid X amount", laughs Kev. "I basically ended up contributing to the design of everything in the film, everything from the Halls of Justice down to Dredd's helmet, the Cursed Earth,

designed around that and around a real person. We weren't trying to make him look super-muscular with a lot of false padding. It was all sculptured body armour in Batman, and the production team were purposefully avoiding that, particularly as the production designer [Nigel Phelps] had worked on Batman with Anton Furst. This is his first job as production designer, so he wants to put his own stamp on it and prove himself - and he's done a

DREDD





loony good" action fan, he had to make sure.

SHOPPING

Much has changed since then's when, in preproduction (not least the script which, at the time, was sold by William Weaver who had co-scripted *Terminator 2*, *Judgment Day*). "I saw two drafts of the script, and I saw one by the guy who did the interwars. I haven't seen one since, but I'm told they're in double figures in revisions." The latest draft is by Steven E. De Souza (who did *Commando*, various other "knee ticks," *Die Hard* 1 and 2, so he knows enough) and it was a fine improvement over every script before it. Things are looking far better than they were.

"To be honest, I got the impression... and it was semi-confirmed afterwards, that Will Weaver had never actually read *Dredd* or been given any to read. He was basically told to write an action

movie and then redacting labels things to public, like Al Pacino's ground on a big pile with guns and so on. The city is very, very big and the buildings are called City Blocks and people can wear them all their lives... there are people called Fatties and the city nuclear wasteland is called the cursed Earth. I read back books like that. He was told to cut them together and make a story out of what he did. I didn't even know what I was doing. I just wrote a script. I don't think that was the worst script I've ever written. At that point there was no director, so everyone to say, 'All right, we're going to go in this direction.' It was purely a production town."

Then Danny Cannon, *Baywatch* (25 now) director of *Young Americans*, was hired on the point of being released. A one-time winner of a Best Picture nomination, Cannon had been convinced (from the fans point of view) of being young and foolish, and he was a fan of the comic.

Compared to Stallone, Cannon

has gone out of the deal pretty much when it comes to fan reaction to his appointment. Stallone has come in for some stick (the *Dreadlines* column made sledge Dredd Magazine was immediately flooded with readers swearing about the choice... and this, a year before a whole frame had been lensed). Kevin Costner? "I heard a lot of people complaining about Stallone being Dredd and it being just another Stallone vehicle. All I can say is that you can't have your bread buttered on both sides: there are very few actors who will guarantee a minimum budget of that magnitude. It was \$65 million when I left it, and to make people want to put that kind of money you've got to have a big star - and out of all the big stars he's the only one who can speak properly! Mel Gibson's too small, Schwarzenegger can't speak, Jean-Claude Van Damme can't speak - and he's wet - and that leaves Stallone. If you don't have an

actor like Stallone, well that's the kind of budget you're going to end up with something like *The Rusher*, where the star drives but with no cash to build Mega-City One, and Dredd needs Mega-City One to be Dredd.

The whole notion of *Terminator* and *Indiana Jones* coming in transporter syndrome, that's their biggest concern at the moment they're very, very sad people... I'm certainly going to be involved in it for the long term. Personally I think Stallone's about right. Much of the problem with *Dredd* is that Stallone's reaction was well known there's no point in arguing the will he? won't he? issue. Taking the helmet off that has been part and parcel of the comic strip. The helmet will come off, as Stallone told *Comic World* writer Tony Earnshaw recently. "That helmet's got to come off sometime. Some guys look good in a helmet, I don't. When they changed the helmet in California I told [my] motorcycle"



PRODUCTION HELL FROM P.34

Lyonais, the Dutch bank, for stopping the \$2.1 cheque paid by Carolco, which was undergoing financial trouble which MGM bailed them out of; in 1993 Golan was back in court demanding an on-screen production credit. In September 1993 Cameron turned in his first treatment for the script, but a year later there's still a four-way lawsuit/ counter-lawsuit battle between 21st Century, Carolco, Viacom and Columbia over who actually owns the rights.

Pre-production is due to begin in October once Cameron has completed his production chores on Gale Ann Hurd's latest film. Word on the film from Cameron is that he wants to concentrate on the angst-ridden side of 17 year old Peter Parker (who will be fitted out with a variation of the alien symbiote black costume). Cameron has been quoted as saying: "It has a much stronger moral underpinning than *True Lies*. I wrote it that way. I've kind of expanded it to include the whole subject of teenage angst, and what if you were 17 and could do anything you fucking wanted anytime you wanted, and you didn't believe anything anybody said about right and wrong? What would you do? It's basically *The Last Temptation of Peter Parker*. Heavy but fun - webs, all the stuff you want to see, but underneath it is a darker theme. As opposed to, for me, what is the reverse: *Batman*, which was all dark and brooding and moody but ultimately wasn't about anything. Sorry, I don't mean to trash another person's work. I mean, Tim did what he wanted to do, which is create the ultimate mood piece. But for me it didn't really take a stand on anything. This film will be completely different."

Rumours from the casting couch can generally be discounted as no-one has yet been approached for the film. Arnie as Doc Octopus is unlikely. Johnny Cusack as Peter Parker is an interesting idea, but at the moment it's simply idle speculation. **SPY VS SPY** (Quincy Davis Entertainment). *Dir* Gene Quintano (*Loaded Weapon*). *Prod* Steven Tisch (co-producer of recent mega-hit *Forrest Gump*). Based on the warring characters from *MAD Magazine*.

STEALTH FORCE (GEL Productions). *Dir* Jorge Montes. *Scr* Mike Valerio. *St* Kevin Bernhardt, Brigitte Nielsen. *Prod* Howard Barish. Based on a short-running 1980s Malibu comic by Valerio, the film concerns a group of dead martial arts experts brought back to life by a mad industrialist to assassinate a drugs baron. Bernhardt plays CIA agent John Lujack, Nielson the all knowing Secretary.

SUPERMAN: THE NEW MOVIE.

Rumoured at one point to be only a month away from filming in Florida, but after months in hiatus, Christopher Reeve left the project stating that he didn't like Cary Bates' script and didn't want to do a film that wasn't a suitable swan song to the series. Warner's later announced that they had reacquired the distribution rights to all future Superman films, almost certainly making the Bates script redundant, and are currently developing *Superman Reborn!*

TALES FROM THE CRYPT. *Prod* Joel Silver. Three theatrical release films are due, including 'Demon Knight', 'Dead Calm' and a third as yet unnamed feature. The first will star Brenda Bakke (*Hot Shots! Part Deux*, *Gunhed*) and Charles Fleischer (the voice of Roger Rabbit) and be directed by Fred Dickerson for October release in the USA.

TANK GIRL (Trilogy Entertainment/ United Artists). *Dir* Rachel Talalay. *Scr* Tedi Sarafian. *St* Lori Petty, Malcolm McDowell, Naomi Watts, Ice-T, Jeff Kobar, Reg E. Cathey, Scott Coffey, Iggy Pop, Don Harvey, Stacy Linn Rawsower, Brian Wimmer. *ExProd* Tom Astor, Aron Warner. *Prod* Richard Lewis, John Watson, Pen Densham. *CoProd* Chris Rehr. Principal shooting began

"With Dredd they've learned a lot from the press that went on about Batman about what worked and what didn't, especially *Batman Returns*," says Kev. "With *Batman* you had a villain far more impressive than the hero - the film should really have been called *Joker* because *Batman* was, to my mind anyway, a supporting character."

"Although Dredd is a fascist bully boy, he's still the hero of the film. In a world of fascist bully boys he's the one you can count on! Nobody should like the villain in this film. It's Rico and he's nasty. They're playing him like a science fictional Hannibal Lector, a super-dangerous criminal everyone wishes was dead but they can't kill."

Unlike Stallone's opponent in *Demolition Man*, Simon Phoenix as played by Wesley Snipes who, at the end of the day, was a rather shallow, wishy washy character, Rico is going to be shown being nasty. He's the Great Unmentionable in the Halls of Justice because he's the Judge that went bad. Armand Assante will be playing Rico - and if you remember your Dredd history that makes him Stallone's clone brother. Who better to play the part than the man who played Stallone's brother in *Paradise Alley* (and for you complete trivia fans, Assante was a wedding guest in the very early Stallone starring *The Lord's of Flatbush*, twenty years ago).

Besides the main villain of the piece, Judge Dredd: The Movie will also feature Diane Lane as Judge Hershey, Mean Machine and the Angel Gang; their inclusion was inspired by director Cannons spotting a Chris Halls painting of Mean in all his 'four' butt-crazy glory. As this is being written, Stallone and Co. are filming scenes with Mean and the Angels, with Stallone delivering the immortal line "You're all under arrest, creeps!"

The filming at Shepperton is still two

Here comes the JUDGE

months from completion and the sets are reportedly very good. When Kev was last on the set Mega-City One was just starting to go up: "It was bare bones - there was no street dressing for want of a better word - but it already looked impressive; they've built the first two or three storeys of the city, overhead roads and everything. A lot of the City Block is a multiple set which strips down to become a ground floor set. They're actually building as much as they can because the director wants to have nearly all



WITH DREDD THEY'VE LEARNED A LOT FROM THE PRESS THAT WENT ON ABOUT BATMAN ABOUT WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DIDN'T

moving shots, and you can't do that with matte paintings. Any matte shots that are in there will be split second jobs.

"It think it's all going to be computer composited anyway; all the upper levels have been

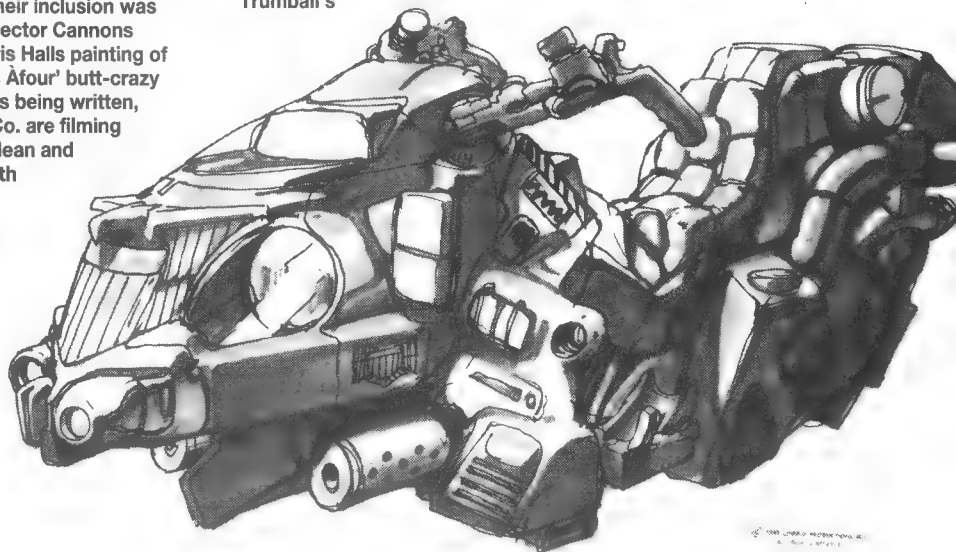
designed on computer and then they're building it in three-dimensions. That's being done in New York where Cinergi [the film's producers] brought Douglas Trumbull's

effects company to do Dredd and *Die Hard III*. The guy who's directing the special effects, Joe Hynick, did the *Predator* films, so he knows what he's doing.

"The only location shooting is going to be the Cursed Earth stuff which is going to be done in Iceland - nice volcanic deserts! At the height of summer it's just a vast grey expanse. Or at least that's what they were going to do the last time I visited. But you know what they say: things aren't filmed until you're actually watching it on the cinema screen!"

Because the films' producers put more time into pre-production and are planning to spend a lot more money on post-production special effects, that now won't be until the traditionally heavy grossing Memorial Day weekend in the States. And if Stallone's recent history repeats itself, he'll be taking quite a slice of the box-office action.

PETE TAYLOR writes for *Film Focus* as well as being our regular reporter on movies and anime reviewer.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED! CONTINUED

be considered late night screen fodder. **Blondie** (1938). *Dir* Frank R. Strayer. *Scr* Richard Flournoy. *St* Penny Singleton, Arthur Lake, Larry Simms, Daisy the Dog, Jonathan Hale, Gene Lockhart, Ann Doran, Irving Bacon. Sets the scene for most of the later stories: Dagwood (Lake)



Penny Singleton - not so blonde here!

is sacked from his job by the boss, Mr. Dithers (Hale), and Blondie (Singleton) thinks he's playing around on the eve of their wedding anniversary. 68m. **Blondie Meets the Boss** (1939). Blondie fills in for Dagwood at the office when he goes on a fishing trip. 75m. **Blondie Takes a Vacation** (1939). The Bumsteads take over a mountain lodge to save it from bankruptcy. 68m. **Blondie Brings Up Baby** (1939). Baby Dumpling (Simms) goes to school and promptly disappears with Dagwood in hot pursuit. 67m. **Blondie on a Budget** (1940). Rita Heyworth turns up as an old flame of Dagwood. 73m. **Blondie has Servant Trouble** (1940). The Bumsteads find themselves in a haunted house complete with creepy servants and ghosts. **Blondie Plays Cupid** (1940). Blondie helps two young lovers elope. Glenn Ford is one of them. 68m. **Blondie Goes Latin** (1941). Fun and frolics on a South American cruise. 69m. **Blondie in Society** (1941). Blondie enters a Great Dane in a dog show only to upset a fellow entrant who is also one of Dagwood's clients. 75m. **Blondie Goes to College** (1942). The Bumsteads go back to college and pretend not to be married resulting in some attention from young Columbia contract players. 74m. **Blondie's Blessed Event** (1942). Dagwood causes a rumpus at a convention whilst Blondie adds another member to the family - Cookie. 69m. **Blondie For Victory** (1942). Topical series entry as Blondie organises local housewives to help with the war effort. 70m. **It's A Great Life** (1943). Sent out to buy a house, Dagwood returns with a horse. 75m. **Footlight Glamour** (1943). Blondie and Dagwood help out the stage-struck daughter of a client. 75m. **Leave it to Blondie** (1945). *Dir* Abby Berlin. The Dagwoods enter a songwriting contest. 75m. **Blondie Knows Best** (1946). *Dir* Abby Berlin. Dagwood pretends to be the boss, Mr. Dithers. 69m. **Life With Blondie** (1946). *Dir* Abby Berlin. Daisy the Dog wins a pin-up competition and is kidnapped by gangsters. 64m. **Blondie's Lucky Day** (1946). *Dir* Abby Berlin. Dagwood is fired again and goes into business with a WAC. 75m. **Blondie's Big Moment** (1947). *Dir* Abby Berlin. Dagwood's in trouble with his new boss, and Blondie gets bitten by the acting bug. 69m. **Blondie's Holiday** (1947). *Dir* Abby

Berlin. Dagwood's in trouble again - this time he's mixed up with gambling and gets thrown in jail after trying to make a fast buck on the ponies. 67m. **Blondie in the Dough** (1947). *Dir* Abby Berlin. Blondie starts a baking business which attracts the attention of a cookie tycoon. 69m. **Blondie's Anniversary** (1947). *Dir* Abby Berlin. Blondie believes the expensive watch Dagwood brings home is an anniversary present - it's actually for a client's wife. 75m. **Blondie's Reward** (1948). *Dir* Abby Singer. Dagwood fouls up again, buying the wrong real estate and is demoted to office boy. 67m. **Blondie's Secret** (1949). *Dir* Edward Bernds. The boss decides he can't afford for Dagwood to go on holiday and organises a couple of crooks to steal the Bumstead's luggage. 68m. **Blondie's Big Deal** (1949). *Dir* Edward Bernds. Dagwood invents a non-flammable paint; unscrupulous rivals switch paints before he can test it on the boss' house. 66m. **Blondie Hits the Jackpot** (1949). *Dir* Edward Bernds. Dagwood seems doomed to work on a construction site until Blondie wins a radio contest. 66m. **Blondie's Hero** (1950). *Dir* Edward Bernds. Dagwood accidentally joins the army reserves. 67m. **Beware of Blondie** (1950). *Dir* Edward Bernds. Mr. Dithers (Edward Earle) puts Dagwood in charge of the office while he goes on holiday. 66m.

THE BOGIE MAN. Created by Alan Grant, John Wagner and Robin Smith in 1989, Francis Clunie, a.k.a. The Bogie Man was an escaped asylum patient, convinced he was a Bogart-style private eye. **The Bogie Man** (1992). *Dir* Charlie Gormley. *Scr* Paul Prender. *St* Robbie Coltrane, Craig Furgusson, Fiona Fullerton, Midge Ure. Made for British tv as an hour-long special. Coltrane as Clunie rather missed the point of the comic where the character did at least resemble Bogart. Furgusson played Detective Sergeant Ure, and Fullerton Dr. Olive Branch, but no-one could be said to have turned in a particularly memorable performance.



Matt Salinger - Captain America for the Nineties

BRENDA STARR. American syndicated strip created by Dale Messick in 1940 about a girl reporter who finds adventure all over the world. **Brenda Starr, Reporter** (1945; serial). **Brenda Starr - Girl Reporter** (1976). *Dir* Mel Stuart. *Scr* George Kirgo. *St* Jill St John, Jed Allan, Sorrell Booke, Tabi Cooper, Victor Buono, Barbara Luna, Torin Thatcher. Below average tv movie, too silly - the plot involves voodoo, extortion and odd goings on in Brazil - to be taken seriously, played too seriously - with St John a florid Brenda - for fun. 78m. **Brenda Starr** (1989). *Dir* Robert Ellis Miller. *St* Brooke Shields, Tony Peck, Timothy Dalton, Diana Scarwid, Jeffrey Tambor, June Gable, Nestor Serrano, Kathleen Wilhoite, Charles Durning, Eddie Albert, Henry Gibson, Ed Nelson. Artist Peck enters the Brenda Starr comic strip to persuade her out of

leaving the paper and gets involved in her adventures. Filmed in 1986 but shelved for years, this is an aimless, pointless film. 87m. Cert PG. [V]

BRICK BRADFORD. Syndicated American strip about an adventurer created by William Ritt and Clarence Gray in 1933. **Brick Bradford** (1947; serial, 15ch). *Dir* Spencer Bennet & Thomas Carr. *Scr* George H. Plympton, Arthur Hoerl, Lewis Clay. *St* Kane Richmond, Rick Vallin, Linda Johnson, Charles Quigley, John Merton, Pierre Watkin. Bradford (Richmond) is hired to protect an anti-missile device from the evil Quigley, eventually travelling to the Moon to rescue the device's creator (Merton) then back into the 18th century to recover part of the formula, all via a 'crystal door'.

BRINGING UP FATHER. American syndicated humour strip created by George McManus in 1913. Father, Jiggs, and social climber wife Maggie suddenly become rich. The story has reached the screen on six occasions, including one feature of the same title in 1928.

BRUCE GENTRY. Short-lived American syndicated strip created by Ray Bailey in 1945 about an adventurous band who set up a small airline in South America. **Bruce Gentry, Daredevil of the Skies** (1946; serial). *Dir* Spencer Gordon Bennett, Thomas Carr.

BUSTER BROWN. American syndicated strip created by R.F. Outcault for the *New York Herald* in 1902 about a ten-year-old suburban kid and his dog, Tige. A split between Outcault and the *Herald* resulted in two Buster strips running for a while. He also starred in a couple of short movies.

Mattson, Joseph Ruskin, Lance LeGault, Frank Marth, Chip Johnson, Dan Barton, Nocana Aranda, Michael McManus, James Ingersoll, Jim B. Smith, Ken Chandler, Jason Wingreen. An ex-Marine carries on the family crime-fighting tradition, doing battle with a master criminal who is planning to Neutron Bomb Phoenix. Made for tv fodder. 100m. Cert U. [V]. **Captain America II: Death Too Soon** (1979). *Dir* Ivan Nagy. *St* Reb Brown, Len Birman, Connie Sellecca, Christopher Lee, Katherine Justice, Lana Wood, Christopher Carey. More less-than-average superheroics as Cap fights terrorists who are using an aging drug to cripple the government. As if they needed to. 100m. **Captain America** (1990). *Dir* Albert Pyan. *Scr* Stephen Tolkin. *St* Matt Salinger, Ronny Cox, Ned Beatty, Darren McGavin, Michael Nouri, Melinda Dillon, Kim Gillingham, Scott Paulin, Bill Mumy, Francesca Neri, Massimilo Massimi, Wayne Preston, Norbert Weisser, Garete Ratliff, Bernardo Ornan. Cap (Salinger) is thawed out of the Alaskan ice after 50 years to do battle with Red Skull (Paulin). Unintentionally funny and, according to one critic, "collapses under the weight of a turgid plot" which spans fifty years - the Skull is, of course, responsible for every bad deed ever from assassinating Kennedy and Martin Luther King to, no doubt, litter on the streets. Pyan's first cut ran to three hours, and had to be slashed in half. It was then re-edited and new scenes were shot...and thus became the mess we now see. 103m. Cert PG. [V].

CAPTAIN MARVEL. Created by Bill Parker & C.C. Beck in 1939 to spearhead Fawcett Publications' new line of comics, the Big Red Cheese was young orphan Billy Batson who only had to say 'Shazam' to gain a variety of powers, from the wisdom of Solomon to the speed of Mercury. **The Adventures of Captain Marvel** (1941; serial, 12ch). *Dir* William Witney, John English. *Scr* Sol Shor, Ronald Davidson, Norman S. Hall, Joseph Poland, Arch B. Heath. *St* Tom Tyler, Frank Coghlan Jr., Harry Worth, Louise Currie, William Benedict, Bryant



Tom Tyler - 'The Big Red Cheese'

Washburn. A convoluted plot has The Scorpion planning to construct a matter transformation machine using an ancient crystal found during an expedition. During the latter Billy Batson (Coghlan) is given the power to become Captain Marvel. The two do battle.

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ARNIE:

BAC

MANY THOUGHT HE'D BE DREDD, BUT WHILE ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER PASSED ON THAT PROJECT, HE'S STILL PACKING THEM IN. JOHN MOSBY LOOKS AT THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HOLLYWOOD'S FAVOURITE AUSTRIAN AND EXCHANGES EXERCISE TIPS WITH THE MAN HIMSELF

A mold puffs on his cigar and smiles. He has good reason. Last year the critics were panning his latest film, *The Last Action Hero*. In the great battle for the summer box-office, the star of the *Terminator* films had taken on the might of *Jurassic Park*'s dinosaurs and been well and truly trounced. Rumour had it that the bubble had burst and that Mr Schwarzenegger was no longer the guaranteed box-office draw he had once been. His next film had to be a success or it was surely...*hasta la vista career, baby*.

Well, *True Lies* just opened...

"I don't think I can get more nervous about this opening than I was about the last opening, or the opening before that," explains Schwarzenegger. "I always reach an enormous height of nervousness before any movie comes out. It doesn't matter which movie it is, because we do films for the public out there, rather than for ourselves. It's alright to do a film that you like, but the people have to like it, the press and critics have to like it, women, men, children - everyone has to like it if it's to be a success. So I was nervous this time, but not any more than any other time."

With *True Lies* he's back in the saddle and back, in many ways to basics. His career has been built on the action genre, but more importantly he has been able to tilt his style of movies in other directions, namely comedy. Other action heroes can pound bad guys, play one-man armies taking on impossible odds to save the day. They can run highly successful chains of movie-

BACK TO BASICS

inspired food-joints...what they can't do is play it strictly for laughs.

"When you do scenes, you don't worry if it's an action scene, a comedy scene, a sad scene. You

just try to do your best and portray the character in the best possible way."

Though he'd played the lead in various films such as *Hercules Goes To New York* (otherwise known as 'Goes Bananas'), the Conan Films and the body-building *Pumping Iron*, it was James Cameron's *The Terminator* in 1984 that shot him to superstardom. Originally called to a reading for the part of Kyle Reece (the good guy from the future eventually played by Michael Biehn) it soon became apparent that Arnie would be much better as the cyborg of the title. Arnold was given the role of the Terminator and movie history was made. What's hard to remember is that in the whole of that ground-breaking movie, Arnie only spoke 74 words!

The roles continued to flood in. *Commando*, *Raw Deal* and *Predator* followed. The *Running Man* knocked *Fatal Attraction* off the number one slot. The action films were proving a lucrative market and Schwarzenegger could be relied upon to include some classic, one-liners for the audience to cheer at as he pumped the baddies full of lead.

Red Heat (1988) saw him team up with James Belushi in an action comedy which teams an American cop (Belushi) with a Pre-Glasnost Russian police officer (Arnie) on the trail of a ruthless killer. Here Arnold was allowed to balance the violent, fast-paced action alongside witty banter with Belushi. The film was a success, but Arnie was still playing the straight man with Belushi taking the best comedy lines.

Later that year Arnold was finally allowed to try a non-action comedy. He teamed up with Danny DeVito to film *Twins*, a story of an experiment to create the perfect human being. All the good genes go to to make up Arnie, all the bad end up as the slugs and snails and puppy-dogs tails that go to make up Danny. Years later they discover each other and learn something about themselves too...aaaahhh. But would it work? The gamble paid off. Schwarzenegger was starring in a movie with almost no killing and enough humour to shake a handful of stand-up comedians at...and the audience loved it.

It was a clever move. Action heroes come and go and whatever fitness program you subscribe too, the old ticking clock keeps going. Sooner or later the competition is going to catch you. Though Schwarzenegger was still at the top of the Hollywood superstars, by adding this new comedic string to his bow, he was giving himself a whole new set of options for his future movies. The crowds were turning out to see him shooting from the lip as well as the hip. DeVito was the perfect foil and though Arnie was pretty much the 'straight man'

again, this time he was allowed to have his own scene-stealing moments.

Schwarzenegger was also starting to raise a family (with wife Maria Shriver) and saw the need to make some family films: "Naturally if you are a father...you become much more aware of the fact that one has to make films for the whole family, not just a certain audience. There are not enough movies out there for kids to see, so inbetween those (more violent) movies I try to make movies suitable for the entire family. Nowadays I make one action movie, then one comedy."

If he's so health and family conscious, then the big question has to be asked...why the heck is he smoking a cigar the size of a Cuban missile?

"Because UIP, *True Lies*' distributor here in England was kind enough to put this box of cigars in my room and I want to make sure by the time I leave they are all gone - so I don't have to pay import duty when I leave for Paris! Hey...I may be very fit, but I don't want to be TOO perfect!"

ACTION...COMEDY

Arnie returned to action-movies with the futuristic *Total Recall* which co-starred a pre-*Basic Instincts* Sharon Stone. The plot allowed Arnie to kill the murderous Stone (who'd been posing as his wife) with the immortal line - "...consider this a divorce!"

The success of *Twins* led to Arnie's second comedy hit, *Kindergarten Cop* in 1990. Here he plays John Kimble a narcotics officer who goes undercover at an infants' school to catch a killer. The Terminator as a nanny? Well, if you could swallow DeVito and Arnie as brothers...heck, it was worth a try, right? Though it didn't achieve quite the success of *Twins*, the film did well enough. It did, however, get criticised for the violent climax which was in total contrast to the 'tough guy having to deal with sweet/nauseating ankle-biters without resulting to pulling out his Magnum and...' scenario of the main plot. In the directorial hands of Ivan Reitman (who had been responsible for *Twins*) the film was another hit.

Cue return to action and Schwarzenegger reteamed with James Cameron for *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*. Ground-breaking effects (this was the film that perfected the incredible 'morphing' techniques glimpsed in Cameron's *The Abyss*), good script, strong plot and Arnie kicking some serious butt made this not only the undoubted hit of 1991, but one of the top-grossing films ever.

Nothing, it seemed, could dent this Austrian man-mountain. He was beyond comparison...unsurpassable. A sure fire hit in anything he did. The ultimate box-office draw. Then, it happened. Three little words changed Arnie's career.



Lori Petty in *Point Break*

June 21 in White Sands, New Mexico. Originally to star Emily Lloyd (in *Country*), she was replaced at the last minute by Petty (*Point Break*, *A League of Their Own*), herself no stranger to last minute replacement (by Sandra Bullock in *Demolition Man*). The rest of the cast has McDowell as Kesslee, Watts as Jet Girl, Ice-T as T-Saint, Kober (as Booger), plus Cathey and Coffey as The Rippers, Pop as Rat Face, Harvey as Sergeant Small and Wimmer as Richard. Set in 2033 on an Earth devastated by ecological cataclysm, where water is a precious commodity. Rebecca Buck (Tank Girl) leads a revolt against the evil Department of Water.

TERRY AND THE PIRATES. Prd Bob Raimi, Mace Neufeld. US TV series, with a feature-length pilot shooting in Hong Kong and Kowloon.

TIME COP (Universal). Dir Peter Hyams. Scr Mark Verheiden (based on a story by Mike Richardson & Mark Verheiden). St Jean-Claude Van Damme, Ron Silver, Mia Sara, Bruce McGill. Prd Moshe Diamont, Sam Raimi, Robert Tapert. Released September 16 in the USA. See feature this issue.

TROUBLE WITH GIRLS (Fox). Scr Will Jacobs, Gerard Jones. Jacobs & Jones created the series as a black & white in 1987 and became a popular Eternity series, some running in colour. Lester Girls was a rugged and rich character whom trouble just seemed to follow. The script for the movie was being written back in 1990, but nothing seemed to happen. Perhaps the current boom in comics will revive interest.

V FOR VENDETTA. Dir Brett Leonard. Scr Hilary Henkin. Prd Joel Silver. Leonard was the director of *Lawnmower Man* (1992; he's also co-penned the sequel, currently shooting). Henkin's script has been around for some years; both Alan Parker and Stephen Hopkins had been mooted for the directorial chair.

VIRUS (Universal). Scr Chuck Pfarrer. Prd Gale Ann Hurd. Based on Dark Horse comic. Warner also has a film titled *Virus* in the works, about a computer virus, scripted by Mark Verheiden.

WATCHMEN. The film that should have been. Terry Gilliam was always connected; Sam Hamm wrote the original draft of the script which was supposed to be excellent. It was re-written by Gilliam, and considered closer to the comic, but not so good in movie terms. Largo Productions were then involved and a new script by Gary Goldman produced. Nothing heard since. Kenneth Branagh was one of the names attached.

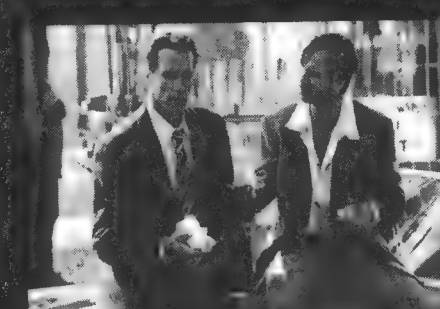
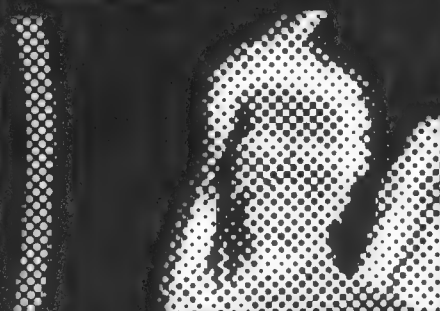
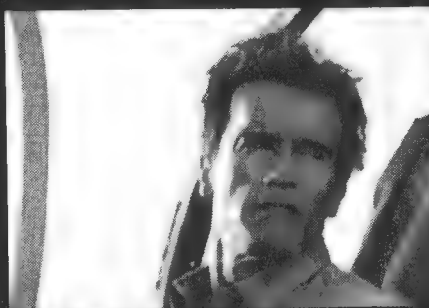
X (Universal). Prd Lawrence Gordon. Based on Dark Horse Comic's Greatest Worlds character.

X-MEN (Fox). Scr Andrew Kevin Walker. Prd Richard & Lauren Schuler-Donner. Release is scheduled for summer of 1996. Again, this isn't the first time round for the X-Men which was at one time in turnaround from Carolco with a script by *Total Recall*'s Gary Goldman and possible interest by James Cameron as director.

ZEN, INTERGALACTIC NINJA (Sceneries Entertainment). Dir Brian Yuzna. Scr Chris Solimine, based on characters created by Steve Stern & Dan Cote in 1987. Prd Philippe Diaz. ExPrd Mark Freedman. Filming starts December for late 1995 release. Yuzna was the producer of the campy-horror hit *Re-Animator* (1985), producing and directing the sequel *Bride of the Re-Animator* (1990), and directed the 1989 blood-soaked horror flick *Society*. **CW**

Last Action Hero.

It was supposed to be Schwarzenegger's best film yet. Take any film that Arnie, Stallone or Willis had ever made, add incredible effects, high concept, a witty script in which Arnie sends up his whole image and the inevitable cute kid in peril. It had all the right ingredients... and it bombed bigger than a truckload of A-Bombs with short fuses. The idea was that a kid gets a magic ticket and enters the movie world of his favourite action film star Jack Slater (Arnie). The villains of the



(Slater) film get the ticket and get into the real world. Jack Slater and kid come into the real world to catch the bad guys who turn up at the premiere of the Slater movie alongside the real Arnold Schwarzenegger. Not our Arnie, but *Last Action Hero*'s Arnie. Confused? Now you understand why it didn't work.

The idea must have seemed fine, but the plot was just too 'clever' by half and lost the audience very quickly. What should have been a nice swipe at the whole action genre (guns that have a constant supply of bullets, good guys never getting shot, huge houses on cop salaries) tried to stuff so much in that even die-hard Arnold fans had to admit that it failed miserably. *Jurassic Park*, a film with incredible special-effects but a lousy screenplay breezed in to wipe the floor with no serious competition. Schwarzenegger's tour-de-force had become a tour-de-farce which the press redubbed LEAST Action Hero.

And so full circle. Arnie had to make sure that his next film was a success. Who you gonna call? In Schwarzenegger's case it was the man who had given him his two biggest successes. Enter James Cameron and the re-working of a French film, *La Totale*. Cameron and Schwarzenegger wanted to create a film that had all the makings of an action film with the comedy edge that Arnie had mastered. And in the cold light of day...they've done just that, turning in a great roller-coaster ride. Cameron is a notoriously hard worker and drives everyone to get things perfect (The crew made up t-shirts that read YOU CAN'T SCARE ME - I WORK FOR JAMES CAMERON). Arnie's pretty daunting himself, so who got the last word on how to shoot the scenes?

"We all threw in ideas and played around with the scenes, but at the end of the day, I think Cameron should have the final say and he *did* have the final say!" Schwarzenegger admits.

So now he's back on top, what next? Let's see action...then comedy, and as *True Lies* is basically an action movie at heart, that would make the next film a comedy...right?

"I've just finished *Junior*, which took four years to work on the script, directed by Ivan Reitman and starring Danny DeVito and Emma Thompson. That's a totally family movie," he explains. Arnie...victim of another strange experiment, this time as a pregnant MAN! Oh well, I always thought Arnie and Danny made great brothers...so I'll reserve my seat now - just don't ask me to watch the birth!

With that he presents the owner of Planet Hollywood with a pair of secret agent sunglasses from the movie...

"There you go, Arnold" - "Why thank you, Arnold!"

Arnie...what a wag! **CW**

Leeds-based JOHN MOSBY is a regular film reviewer and interviewer for *Satellite Times*, *Film Review*, etc. He interviews for *Comic World* have included the crew of *Red Dwarf*, *Demolition Man*iac Wesley Snipes, the enterprising William Shatner, and last month's chat with the immortal Christopher Lambert.

BATMAN FOREVER

WHERE IT TOOK DC TWO YEARS OF CAREFUL CONTINUITY NURTURING TO OUST BRUCE WAYNE FROM TOP-BILLING THE BATBOOKS, ALL HAVOC HAS BROKEN LOOSE IN THE PRE-PRODUCTION OFFICES OF THE THIRD BATMAN MOVIE IN RECENT MONTHS. STEVE HOLLAND AND JOHN MOSBY TRY TO SORT OUT THE RUMOURS FROM THE HARD FACTS, AIDED AND ABETTED BY DIRECTOR JOEL SCHUMACHER

You would have thought that with Hollywood's habit of lampooning itself they would have saved the title of the latest *Batman* movie until the next one, and maybe go one step beyond puns of the *Die Hard/Die Harder* type with *Batman IV-Ever*. When *Batman II* became *Batman Returns* - Tim Burton's homage to *The Dark Knight Returns*? - someone, somewhere seemed to have made a deliberate decision to avoid the usual roman numerals in favour of 'real' titles. So *Batman III* became *Batman Forever* by the time principal shooting began in September. In pre-production it may have been better named *Batman III-for-all*.

When Tim Burton bid farewell to the Caped Crusader franchise, many thought that the unique feel he had brought to the film would be lost. In hindsight, it was just the tip of a Hollywood-sized ice-berg, as in the months that followed just about everyone once linked with the movie has exited.

The movie that will never be made would have seen Michael Keaton reprise his role as the Dark Knight and once again tackling not one but two super-villains...three if you count both sides of the schizophrenic Harvey 'Two-Face' Dent, as played by Billy Dee Williams. If Dent was to return it was contractually agreed that Williams would also return to take the role.

Then there's The Riddler: who else could play the mirthful master of the enigma but Robin Williams, fresh from the mega-success of *Mrs Doubtfire*? And the much publicised casting call in New York to find an unknown actor to play *Batman's* sidekick, the much missed Robin, who had been written into various drafts of the previous two movies, and who managed to slip out of the bat cave during re-writes? Ricky

Addison Reed had secured the role in the first movie, only for Burton to decide that Robin didn't fit his ideas for the film. Marlon Wayans came closer in *Batman Returns*, but also found himself dropped only days before he was due to start shooting his scenes.

The months rolled by: Burton was always attached as Executive Producer so only a few eyebrows were raised when Joel Schumacher signed on the dotted line. At the time he was publicising the hard-biting *Falling*



Down in which the gridlocked (mentally and physically) Michael Douglas

leaves his car and plots a course across town that becomes a warpath; he seems to leave his blinkers behind



Val Kilmer holds Kurt Russell in *Tombstone*

along with the crush of traffic, and sees the ordinary world with disappointed eyes. It was in many ways a dangerous movie for Douglas as D-Fens, a totally unsympathetic role as a character whose new world-view meant he could not compromise. It ground on a nerve with the viewing public because 'D' was doing what we've all wanted to do at one time or another.



If anything, *Falling Down* was one of the lighter films Schumacher has made - purely in lighting terms. He's best known for more darker, visually stunning, films like *The Lost Boys* and *Flatliners*. They only come out at night: vampires and medical students...it's not a far cry from *The Batman*.

Schumacher was in England to promote *The Client*, a close-to-the-novel adaptation of John Grisham's best-seller starring Susan Sarandon and Tommy Lee Jones which pulled in \$44 million in its opening week in the USA. That's a long way from his days as a dressmaker on *Play It As It Lays*

character. Schumacher recalls that he asked Williams to be the Riddler early on in the films development: "He was considering it. If you've ever met him, he's one of the most charming, nicest people in the world. I really enjoyed getting to know him. He was considering it...for a year! I really hope that I get to do some stuff with Robin - I'd really like to work with him, [but] this time he just couldn't say yes and time moved on..." He sighs.

Waiting in the wings however was Jim Carrey who said 'Yes' in less time than it took the dithering Williams to slip into a patterned frock. As Edward Nygma he'll be playing an ex-WayneTech employee who feels rebuffed when Bruce ends development on a mind-control helmet he has created because it is too dangerous, and decides to use his genius to wipe out Bruce. "I was keeping an eye on Jim Carrey, who I'd known for ten years but never had a role for," says Schumacher. "You can't just stick him in a movie. Like Robin, he's a tour de force."

Carrey himself already has hundreds of ideas for the role: "I'm just going to take it as far out there as I can," and promises "I'm not going to imitate anybody. This Riddler will be my Riddler."

FLIP SIDE

Someone who came unstuck from the movie was another Williams - Billy Dee, who had played District Attorney Harvey Dent in the first *Batman* movie. Instead, Schumacher brought Tommy Lee Jones with him from *The Client* where he had played a prosecuting



attorney, Roy Foltrigg, trying to extract information from a young boy as to the whereabouts of a

mob-assassinated U.S. senator. The young boy is the client of the title, getting himself a lawyer in the shape of Susan Sarandon (far more shapely than the grey-haired 50-something of the novel).

"I thought that [audiences] would believe Tommy as someone running for the Mayor of Gotham City and as the Phantom of the Opera type. Jack Nicholson managed to bring that pop-opera to the original, and I think

Tommy has the ability to do that in Batman Forever. Once I thought of him for the role, I couldn't think of anyone else!" Jones actually didn't require too much arm-twisting to take on the role: when Schumacher arrived to make his pitch he found Jones had already been talked into the part by his 11-year-old son, Austin, who was a big fan of Two-Face!

It's not difficult to believe in Jones as a schizophrenic after his kooky performance in Under Siege, or as the obsessive cop on Harrison Ford's trail in The Fugitive which earned him an Academy Award as best supporting actor) or his mad Irish bomber Ryan Gaerity in Blown Away. Harvey Dent's origin in the film will be similar to that of the comic: he'll be involved in an accident which will disfigure half his face so horribly that it splits his personality in two; he blames The Batman and decides to destroy him (there's a pattern forming here: recall the Joker's origin where his disfigurement drove him mad? He blames the Batman, yes?). How? By hiring The Riddler!

"Harvey's perfect on one side and Phantom on the other," explains Schumacher. "We've made everything about him 'cut in half': he's got his clothes split down the middle, his house, two girlfriends - Leather and Lace. Need I say more?" Well, yes...please? And Schumacher adds, "Lace us played by Drew Barrymore," and we forgive him everything, even the absence of Winona Ryder playing Robin.

That role was the subject of a lengthy talent search, but has eventually been landed by Scent of a Woman, Three Musketeers and Mad Love (with Drew Barrymore) co-star Christopher O'Donnell. "Chris O'Donnell I felt was the perfect Robin," is Schumacher's direct opinion. Only Burt Ward would disagree, having played Dick Grayson many years earlier and still of the opinion that Burton should have cast himself and Adam West in the new dark Gotham (West was in fact offered a cameo as Bruce Wayne's father). Dick was always the 'ward' of Bruce Wayne in the tv series, but the film will attempt to fill-in some of his background as a circus acrobat, the only member of the Flying Graysons troupe to survive the actions of the flipped-side of Harvey Dent.

With Dent after Batman and The Riddler after Bruce Wayne, our hero is in for a hot time. Wiping his brow will be Chase Meridian, a criminal psychologist fixated with the Batman and in love with Bruce. After all the cast changes in the first two movies that saw Sean Young replaced by Kim Basinger in the first movie, and then Annette Bening impregnated out of the second, making way for

Michelle Pfeiffer, it's no wonder that the role has been the cause of much musical casting: first thought to be with Robin Wright, the name attached longest to the role was Rene Russo (from Lethal Weapon 3, In the Line of Fire); but more recent changes in the cast have meant Russo being dropped in favour of a younger actress. Rumoured love-attractions included Sandra Bullock (hot from Speed), but she opted to do While You Were Sleeping instead; Dana Delany, Elle Macpherson, Cindy Crawford and Linda Hamilton were the first names in the stalls. First out was Far and Away star Nicole Kidman:



Nicole Kidman

"gorgeous and talented - who wouldn't cast her?" opines Schumacher. Not us. Her last movie, coincidentally was My Life with Michael Keaton.

The role-reversal was caused by the biggest casting upset the film had undergone: at a hastily convened press conference in late July it was announced that Michael Keaton wouldn't be donning the batcape for a third stint. Keaton, was reportedly unhappy with the script and the direction Schumacher was taking the film: the re-write by Akiva Goldman had boosted the role of The Riddler for Williams and once again Batman was

being pushed into the background by two larger-than-life big-name villains. According to Schumacher, "When I was first asked to do [the film] a year ago...Michael Keaton was involved because he'd already done the other two. Michael had a whole life on Batman before me. He had many, many considerations about doing the third one: very serious financial considerations, very serious contractual considerations and whole lifestyle considerations." Keaton

was offered a serious \$13 million to don the mask, but seemed to be holding out for \$15m plus a share in film and merchandising profits, a situation Warner Brothers declined to consider. "It became more evident that we had to consider [whether] it wouldn't be better casting a new actor," says Schumacher...and did so. "It was an amicable parting of the ways," he adds, although he's also joked that he "had Tonya Harding break Michael's legs!"

The keys to the bat cave were offered to Val Kilmer, the 34-year-old portrayer of Doc Holliday in the recent western, Tombstone, previously best-

known for roles in Top Gun, Willow, The Doors and True Romance, which is a pretty good CV for someone who's not truly considered Hollywood A-List yet. He's certainly found a fan in Schumacher: "I think Val is a great choice to replace [Michael Keaton]. I thought he gave a brilliant performance in Tombstone." Kilmer has reputedly signed up an option on the fourth Bat-



Chris O'Donnell

movie...but we're getting way ahead of ourselves.

The younger Bats (Kilmer being 8 years younger than



Tommy-Lee Jones

Keaton) meant a younger love interest, hence Nicole Kidman. But fear not, because Batman Forever does have some familiar faces: Pat Hingle is back as Commissioner Gordon and, Schumacher laughs, "Michael Gough will be returning as Alfred. God, we wouldn't dream of making it without Michael!"

Some people are just indispensable. **CW**



star Christopher O'Donnell. "Chris O'Donnell I felt was the perfect Robin," is Schumacher's direct opinion. Only Burt Ward would disagree, having played Dick Grayson many years earlier and still of the opinion that Burton should have cast himself and Adam West in the new dark Gotham (West was in fact offered a cameo as Bruce Wayne's father). Dick was always the 'ward' of Bruce Wayne in the tv series, but the film will attempt to fill-in some of his background as a circus acrobat, the only member of the Flying Graysons troupe to survive the actions of the flipped-side of Harvey Dent.

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Hello again.

Again? Who is this guy? Well, if you read this column regularly (and if you don't you should cos there's some good stuff to be found in it) you'll remember I wrote a couple of months ago about the hardships faced by small press companies, in particular when the venture is run on experimental concepts (like ours) and when they are faced with retailers who don't really care about comics other than as fast buck vehicles. Thankfully, many of you agreed with me (including a couple of retailers!) – so cheers if you sent me a card or called me up.

So, what's happened since then?

Well, "Rogue's Warriors" sold okay in the end, but it was hard work! In fact, too hard for us to continue doing all the work ourselves (I think Pete and I kept the valium industry in the black recently). What is good is that there are now two distributors in operation to help press ventures, and we're in the process of talking to them, so if you bought issue 1 of Warrior's hang on cos issue 2 is ready (as are issues 1 of The Amazon, and Parallel Minds).

But the main problem still lies in the perception of small press, particularly in terms of UK small press. Most retailers still look at the local, cheaply produced stuff in a bad light, comparing it with the high quality small press stuff that springs from the USA (always assuming the retailer looks beyond Marvel, DC and Image, that is). But take a look at the new sections in the last few issues of Comic World and you'll see that one by one most of the companies have gone bust. Why? Because they tried to be big press. Why? *Because they thought they had to!*

Basically there has to be a sea-change in the perception as to what "small press" is about. HAP for example is a workshop. The stuff you'll see from us has rough edges. It's fun, and some of it is really powerful, but our writers and artists need time to gain confidence and experience. We do properly print our titles though, but the cost is high. Yet we're told that we wouldn't get shelf space at all if we relied on photocopies and staples. Likewise we're told we should go for colour. Excuse me! But even just adding one colour to the cover of Warriors was financially crippling. Small press is small press and we shouldn't have to emulate the big boys.

Or should we?

Well, actually, there are things small press companies should be doing. We should run ourselves like real businesses. We need to utilise professional marketing and sales

techniques. But we can't afford to print high-quality full colour comics and stay in business. So yes, we should try to make the title look as professionally produced as possible but please people, don't expect us to be capable of some of the pyrotechnics you find from the big boys.

So, what do you get from small press then?

The future!

Without small press to bring new talent steadily through the ranks, the industry will not have enough good writers and artists to keep the market vibrant and alive. Do any of you remember the crash of the 1970s. I do. It will happen again if we don't cultivate new blood at the grass roots level.

So, what can you do to help?

Well, as fans, join in the fun. Give small press a chance. There's some good stuff being produced and it's a shame that much of it will disappear. Retailers – have a more open mind! We aren't going to make you millions, but variety at the desk will win you more customers, believe me! Small press companies. Ah well, that's the rub isn't it? Well we need to get organised. So here's an invitation. A couple of us fledgling ventures are getting together. The idea is to organise a round table of around 6 or 7 small press ventures. We are NOT talking about a merger/franchise/input of capital etc. We ARE talking about a loose affiliation and an input of ideas and experiences. What's the benefit of it all? Well, for a start we can all learn from each other's successes and failures. We can pool resources in terms of advertising and marketing. Fancy a double page spread in Comic World anyone? I can't afford it. You probably can't afford it. But a few of us together! That's a different matter isn't it? We can cross-advertise and share our core readers. We can even do inter-company cross-overs!

But the most important benefit is that small press will be talking to the press, the retailers and the fans with one voice! We will have different messages but will be presenting a common interface. Individually, it's hard work getting the mind-share. But a body of us taking a common approach! Whoa. All of a sudden, we build a critical mass and retailers have to take notice of us.

If you want to discuss our plans for the round table (or HAP's own plans) call me, Darren Smithson, on (0734) 868271. In the meantime, enjoy the rest of this issue of Comic World and then go out and support your local small press ventures. You don't know what you're missing!

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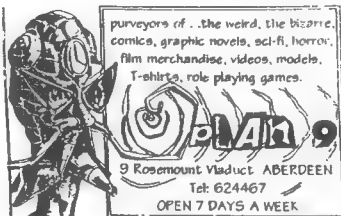
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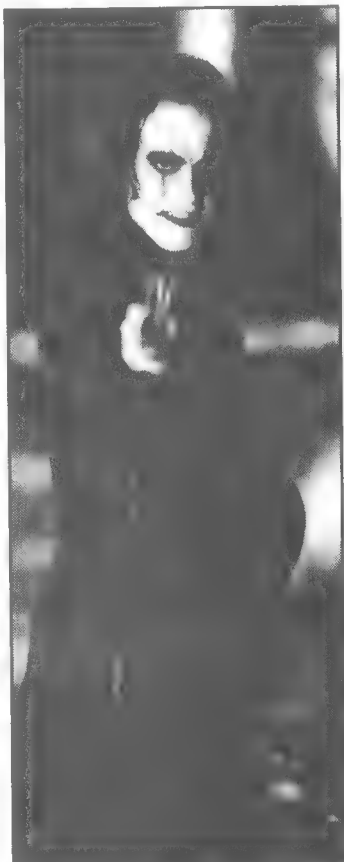
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YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED! CONTINUED

THE CROW. Created by James O'Barr for the independent comic of the same name which debuted in 1989. *The Crow* (1994). *Dir* Alex Proyas. *Scr* David J. Schow & John Shirley. *St* Brandon Lee, Michael Wincott, Rochelle Davis, Ernie Hudson. Straight transfer from comic to screen, retaining the style and horror of Barr's original. Eric Draven (Lee) is killed by a gang trying to drive him from his apartment; his raped girlfriend (Sofia Shinas) later dies in hospital. One year



The late Brandon Lee as *The Crow*

later the dead-but-alive Draven is led by a crow to seek retribution, killing the gang members (Lawrence Mason, Michael Massee, David Patrick Kelly and Angel David); along the way he meets young Sarah (Davis) who is kidnapped by ganglord and sister team Top Dollar (Wincott) and Myca (Bai Ling) as the film heads for its roof-top climax. Already notorious because of Lee's death whilst filming, for whom this was a star vehicle, the film stands, and falls, on the set pieces as characterisation is irrelevant and whilst there's nothing here that hasn't been done elsewhere, it holds together well. 101m. Cert 18.

DIABOLIK. Italian masked criminal strip created by two sisters, Angela and Giuliana Giusani, in 1962. One of the most successful strips of all time (still running), it was the first Italian strip "per adulti" only. *Danger - Diabolik* (Italy/France, 1967). *Dir* Mario Bava. *Scr* Dino Maiuri, Adriano Baracco, Mario Bava. *St* John Phillip Law, Marisa Mell, Michel Piccoli, Adolfo Celi, Terry-Thomas, Claudio Gora. Entertaining super-criminal tale with costumed Law fighting crooks, outre sets and a bizarre soundtrack by Ennio Morricone.

Enjoyable and with some fine set pieces, although the ending is disappointing. 105m (also cut, 100m, 88m).

DENNIS THE MENACE. American syndicated strip created by Hank Ketchum in 1951 as star of a daily gag panel and became a Sunday feature the following year. *Dennis the Menace* (1987). *Dir* Doug Rogers. *St* Victor DiMattia, William Windom, Patricia Estrinn, James W. Jansen, Barton Tinapp, Patsy Garrett. Below average tv movie. 100m. *Dennis the Menace* (1993; released in UK as *Dennis*). *Dir* Nick Castle. *Scr* John Hughes. *St* Walter Matthau, Mason Gamble, Joan Plowright, Christopher Lloyd, Lea Thompson, Robert Stanton. Scripted and produced by *Home Alone's* Hughes, whose films exploiting Macaulay Culkin obviously derived from Ketchum's prototype six-year-old bundle of mischief. This has plenty of sight gags, an abundance of mayhem, and enough laughs to keep the story careering despite puppy-dog eyed Gamble, mostly at the expense of Matthau's cantankerous Mr. Wilson and sneak thief Switchblade Sam (Lloyd). 96m. Cert PG. [V].

DICK TRACY. Long-running syndicated strip starring the jut-jawed crime fighter created by Chester Gould in 1931. *Dick Tracy* (1937; serial, 15ch). *Dir* Ray Taylor, Alan James. *Scr* Barry Shipman, Winston Miller, Morgan Cox, George Morgan. *St* Ralph Byrd, Kay Hughes, Smiley Burnette, Lee Van Atta, John Piccoli, Dick Bench, Carleton Young, Edwin Stanley. Tracy, somehow a member of the FBI for his Republic appearances, has to stop a criminal known as The Limping One, leader of the Spider Armada, who performs a brain operation on Tracy's brother to turn him into a depraved villain (to emphasise the change the role - before and after - was played by two actors, Bench and Young). From his supersonic aircraft, the Limping One tries to collapse the Golden Gate Bridge using a sonic vibrator. Released on video as a 57m compilation under the title *The Spider Strikes*. Cert PG. [V]. *Dick Tracy Returns* (1938; serial, 15ch). *Dir* William Witney, John English. *St* Byrd, Lynn Roberts, Charles Middleton, Jerry Tucker. The Stark family, Pa and his five hulking sons, kill a G-Man whilst robbing an armoured car. Tracy is



Ralph Byrd and some bird, menaced by 'The Claw' in *Dick Tracy's Dilemma* assigned the job of catching them. *Dick Tracy's G-Men* (1939; serial, 15ch). *Dir* William Witney, John English. *Scr* Barry Shipman, Rex Taylor, Franklyn Adreon, Ronald Davidson. *St* Byrd, Irving Pichel, Phyllis Isley, Ted Pearson, Walter Miller.

International spy and anarchist Zarnoff (Pichel), who went on to direct *Destination Moon*, executed in a gas chamber, is revived by drugs to continue sabotaging American defences. Phyllis Isley later changed her name to Jennifer Jones and won an Oscar for *The Song of Bernadette*, and many later nominations. *Dick Tracy vs Crime Inc.* (1941; serial, 15ch). *Dir* William Witney, John English. *Scr* Ronald Davidson, Norman S. Hall, William Lively, Joseph O'Donnell, Joseph Poland. *St* Byrd, Michael Owen, Jan Wiley, John Davidson, Ralph Morgan, Kenneth Harlan. Tracey fights an invisible foe known only as The Ghost (Morgan) who wants to destroy New York after officials send his brother to the electric chair. Later re-released as *Dick Tracy vs The Phantom* (1952). *Dick Tracy* (1945). *Dir* William Berke. *Scr* Eric Taylor, based on the comic strip by Chester Gould. *St* Morgan Conway, Jane Greer, Mike Mazurki, Anne Jeffreys, Lyle Latell, Joseph Crehan, Trevor Bardette. Tracy, back to being an official of a police department, tracks down the disfigured criminal Splitface, determined to kill the jury who sent him to prison. He starts by stabbing a schoolteacher on a lonely street. 61m. Also released as *Dick Tracy, Detective*. *Dick Tracy Vs Cueball* (1946). *Dir* John Rawlins. *St* Morgan Conway, Anne Jeffreys, Lyle Latell, Rita Corday, Dick Wessell, Esther Howard, Douglas Walton, Ian Keith, Joseph Crehan, Byron Foulger, Jimmy Crane, Milton Parsons. Skelton Knaggs. Tracy is determined to break up a gang of jewel thieves, but a mysterious bald stranger, Cueball (Wessell) whom they have double-crossed keeps beating him to it and murdering them. 62m. Cert PG. [V]. *Dick Tracy's Dilemma* (1947). *Dir* John Rawlins. *St* Ralph Byrd, Lyle Latell, Kay



A 'Breathless' Madonna and Warren Beatty's Dick

Christopher, Jack Lambert, Ian Keith, Jimmy Conlin, Bernadeen Hayes, William B. Davidson, Tony Barrett, Richard Powers, Harry Strang, Jason Robards Sr., Al Bridge, Sean McClory, Tom London. The Claw is a notorious one-armed killer who uses his iron hook hand to kill a nightwatchman (actually one of Tracy's accomplices) during a fur robbery. 62m. Cert PG. [V]. *Dick Tracy Meets Gruesome* (1947). *Dir* John Rawlins. *St* Byrd, Boris Karloff, Anne Gwynne, Lyle Latell, June Clayworth, Lex Barker, Jim Nolan, Joseph Crehan, Milton Parsons, Lee Phelps, Harry Harvey, Harry Strang, William Gould. Karloff plays the disfigured escaped convict Gruesome whose gang are using a paralysing gas to rob banks. 65m. Cert PG. [V]. *Dick Tracy* (1990). *Dir* Warren Beatty. *Scr* Jim

Cash, Jack Epps, Jr. *St* Beatty, Madonna, Charlie Korsmo, Al Pacino, Glenn Headly, Mandy Patinkin, Charles Durning, Paul Sorvino, William Forsythe, Seymour Cassell, Dustin Hoffman, Dick Van Dyke, Catherine O'Hara. Ambitious directorial debut for Beatty, strikingly stylised using prime colours, and surprisingly successful. Beatty calls on old mates in extreme makeup to play the plethora of bad guys, Pacino (almost unrecognisable) nominated for a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his portrayal of Big Boy Caprice, but Hoffman (as Mumbles) coming out top. Big Boy, having already disposed of Lips Manlis (Sorvino) and taken his girl, club canary Breathless Mahoney (Madonna), wants to unite the underworld and run the city. Tracy (Beatty) has to face the whole criminal community, whilst juggling the problems of a disappeared girlfriend, Tess Trueheart (Headly), and the troublesome Kid (Korsmo) who adopts Tracy. 103m. Cert PG. [V].

DIXIE DUGAN. American syndicated strip created by J.P. McEvoy & John Striebel in 1929. It is generally considered an uninspired effort; Dixie as female lead lacks any true originality in either drawing style or characterisation. *Dixie Dugan* (1943). *St* Lois Andrews.

DR STRANGE. The Master of the Occult was created by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, debuting in 1963. *Dr Strange* (1978). *Dir/Scr* Philip DeGuere. *St* Peter Hooten, Jessica Walter, John Mills, Clyde Kusatsu, Eddie Benton, Philip Sterling, June Barrett, Sarah Rush, David Hooks, Diana Webster, Blake Marion, Bob Delell, Frank Catalano, Larry Anderson, Inez Pedrosa. The future Master of the Mystic Arts becomes the protege of Mills in order to foil Walter's plans to expand her collection of souls. Cheapie made for tv pilot movie, with lots of stock hospital footage. 100m. Cert U. [V].

DONDI. American syndicated strip created by Gus Edson & Irwin Hasen in 1955 about an Italian orphan adopted by a GI, but caught up in a tug-of-love triangle with the matronly Mrs McGowan. *Dondi* (1962). *Dir* Albert Zugsmith. *St* David Cory, David Janssen, Patii Page, Walter Winchall, Gale Gordon. Golden Turkey standard sentimental clap trap with Cory gasping "Goshes!" which is supposed to be cute. It has been suggested this is the reason why Janssen went on the run in *The Fugitive*. 100m.

ELLA CINDERS. American syndicated strip created by Bill Conselman & Charlie Plumb in 1925, the cinderella-like Ella toils under the harsh regime of her mother and sisters until she wins a Hollywood contract. *Ella Cinders* (1926). *Dir* Alfred E. Green. *St* Colleen Moore, Lloyd Hughes, Vera Lewis, Doris Baker, Emily Gerdes, Jed Prouty. Considered quite a peppy movie with Moore as Ella escaping crotchety mother (Lewis) to find fame in Hollywood after winning a contest. 60m.

THE FABULOUS FURRY FREAK BROTHERS. Created by Gilbert Shelton, amongst the most enduring of underground characters. According to *World Encyclopedia of Comics* "The brothers have appeared in a movie - something of a classic at comic conventions since it is too sex-orientated to be shown in regular theatres".

FATTY FINN. American syndicated strip created in 1923 (as 'Fat and his Friends') by Sydney Wentworth Nicholls. Filmed as *Kid Stakes* (1927).

THE FLASH. Created by Gardner Fox in 1940 and first drawn by Harry Lampert. The fastest man alive only lasted until the late 1940s, but was revived in 1956, and often cited as the first Silver Age hero.

The Flash (1990). *Dir* Robert Iscove. *St*



Amanda Pays, John Wesley Shipp, Tim Thomerson, Michael Nader, Lycia Naff, Robert Hooks, M. Emmet Walsh, Priscilla Pointer, Eric DaRae, Paula Marshall. Forensic chemist (Shipp) is struck by lightning and gains the power of speed, dons a natty costume and fights crime. Made as a pilot for a tv series, it's not too bad. 94m. *Cert* PG. *[V]*. **The Flash 2: Revenge of the Trickster** (1991). *Dir* Danny Bilson. *St* John Wesley Shipp, Amanda Pays, Joyce Hyser, Mark Hamill. More action from Central City as the Flash takes on The Trickster who has plans to kill Flash and take over the city. 89m. *Cert* PG. *[V]*.

FLASH GORDON. Created by Alex Raymond in 1934 for a long-running King Features syndicated science fiction strip. **Flash Gordon** (1936; serial, 13ch). *Dir* Frederick Stephani. *Scr* Stephani, George Plymton, Basil Dickey, Ella O'Neal. *St* Buster Crabbe, Jean Rogers, Charles Middleton, Priscilla Lawson, Richard Alexander, Frank Shannon. The planet Mongo is about to crash into Earth and adventurer Crabbe, scientist Shannon and love interest Dale Arden (Rogers) travel to the strange planet to discover a feudal society and a love quintangle: Ming the Merciless (Middleton), who has ousted Prince Barin (Alexander), lust after Arden who loves Flash who is lusted after by Aura (Lawson), Ming's daughter, whom Barin loves from afar. Age and charm mask the strings on the spluttering rockets. Later condensed as a 97m, *Cert* PG, film under the title *Spaceship to the Unknown. Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars* (1938; serial, 15ch). *Dir* Ford Beebe, Robert F. Hill. *Scr* Ray Trampe, Norman S. Hall, Wyndham Gittens, Herbert Dolmas. *St* Buster Crabbe, Jean Rogers, Frank Shannon, Charles Middleton, Beatrice Roberts, Richard Alexander. Ming is now in collusion with the Queen of Mars (Roberts) to strip the Earth of nitrogen. Lacks much of the charm of the

first serial, but has its moments. Later released as *Deadly Ray From Mars*, edited down to 99m which has also been released as *Flash Gordon: Mars Attacks the World. Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe* (1940; serial, 12ch). *Dir* Ford Beebe, Ray Taylor. *Scr* George H. Plympton, Basil Dickey, Barry Shipman. *St* Buster Crabbe, Carol Hughes, Charles Middleton, Frank Shannon, Beatrice Roberts, Anne Gwynne, Roland Drew, Shirley Deade, Victor Zimmerman, Don Rowan, Lee Powell, Richard Alexander, Montague Shaw, Michael Mark, Donald Curtis. Ming saturates the Earth with the deadly purple dust; Flash and Dale (now played by Hughes) set off to the planet Frigea to find the antidote. Ming is killed at the end of this, the worst of the three. 240m. *Cert* U. *[V]* Also released in an 85m edited version as *Purple Death from Outer Space. Flash Gordon* (1974) *Dir* Michael Benveniste, Howard Ziehm. *Scr* Benveniste. *St* Jason Williams, Suzanne Fields, John Hoyt, William Hunt, Joseph Hudgins, Mycle Brandy, Candy Samples, Lance Larson, Nora Witemnik, Steven Grummette, Judy Ziehm, Linus Gator, Mark Fore, Donald Harris, Susan Moore, Sally Alt. Soft-porn parody: Earth is blasted with a sex ray, and Flash (Williams) blasts off to the planet Porno to battle Emperor Wang (Hunt). 90m. *Cert* 18. *[V]* (cut to 84m)]. **Flash Gordon** (1980) *Dir* Michael Hodges. *St* Sam J. Jones, Melody Anderson, Chaim Topol, Max Von Sydow, Ornella Muti, Timothy Dalton, Brian Blessed, Peter Wyngarde, Mariangela Melato, John Osborne, Richard O'Brien, John Hallam, Philip Stone, Suzanne Danielle. Probably has the best remembered theme song for a comic related film, from the soundtrack by Queen. Visually superb but woefully let down by a jokey script. Jones as Flash is generally considered inadequate as a hero (he was an ex-Playgirl pin-up), Anderson (as Arden) is prettily average;



both are overshadowed by Sydow as Ming and an over-the-top, booming Blessed. 115m. *Cert* PG. *[V]*. **Flash Gordon 2** (1990) *Dir* Howard Ziehm. *St* Vince Murdoch, Robyn Kelly, Tony Travis, Morgan Fox, William Dennis Hunt, Bruce Scott. Even more dire sequel to the above. Flash has to save the universe from impotence. 98m. *Cert* 18. *[V]* Also released as *Flesh Gordon and the Cosmic Cheerleaders*.

GASOLINE ALLEY. American syndicated strip created by Frank King in 1918, highly popular for its rambling real-life quality: the characters age as the years go on and the nominal 'hero', Skeezi Wallet hit 18 in 1939 and was one of the first characters to serve in the armed forces. **Gasoline Alley** (1951). *St* Scotty Becket.

THE GUMPS. American syndicated strip created by Sidney Smith in 1917 and featuring a typical lower middle class American family. The strip became a merchandising phenomena, and the family hit the screens in both live action and animated films.

GUNHED. Japanese manga series, created by Kia Asamiya. **Gunhed** (Japan, 1989). *Dir* Masato Harada. *Scr* Harada, James Bennon. *St* Masahiro Takashima, Brenda Bakke, Yujin Harada, Kaori Mizushima, Aya Enryoji, Micky Curtis, James B. Thompson, Doll Nguyen. On the island of 8JO in the Pacific in 2025, a team of scavengers arrive to see what they can salvage from Chiron 5, a master computer. But Chiron 5 comes back to life, and attacks the team with Gunhed unmanned robots. Claustrophobic and almost unfathomable, this is a darkly filmed corridor movie (a la *Alien*). Plenty of action, an average cast, some fine effects but emerging at the end as unsatisfying and uncaring. 101m. *Cert* 12. *[V]*.

THE GUYVER. Japanese manga created by Yoshiaki Takaya in 1985. *Mutronics: The Movie* (USA/Japan, 1992) *Dir* Screaming Mad George, Steve Wang. *St* Mark Hamill, Vivian Wu, Jack Armstrong, David Gale, Jimmie Walker, Michael Berryman, Peter Spollos, Spice Williams, Willard Pugh, Jeffrey Combs, David Wells, Linnea Quigley. Armstrong is the Americanised hero who becomes The Guyver; most of the other cast become odd-shaped Zoanoid monsters. CIA agent Hamill is hilariously thrown away, becoming a cockroach. Contrived



nonsense. 92m. *Cert* 15. *[V]*. Also released as *The Guyver. The Guyver: Dark Hero* (1994). *Dir* Steve Wang. *Scr* Nathan Long. *St* David Hayter, Kathy Christopherson, Christopher Michael. Set a year on with a new cast, the armour has now invaded Sean Barker (Hayter) who becomes a vigilante. Meanwhile, an archeological dig has uncovered Zoanoid remains, and new Guyver units...and the alien controlled Kronos Corporation isn't as dead as you thought they were after the first film. Far more serious endeavour, staying closer to the original manga.

GWENDOLINE. American erotic/bondage strip created in 1946 for *Bizarre Magazine* by John Willie (actually *Bizarre* editor, John Courtts). **Gwendoline** (France, 1984). *Dir* Just Jaeckin. *St* Tawny Kitaen, Brent Huff, Bernadette LaFont, Jean Rougerie. Lots of nudity as Kitaen goes off in search of her lost father in the company of a man and another girl. In the East they encounter a tribe of warrior women. Juvenile sex romp with some minor interest from the involvement of Belgium-born designer Francois Schuiten whose work has appeared in *Pilote* and *Heavy Metal*.

99m. *Cert* 18. *[V]* (cut to 95m)]. Also released as *The Perils of Gwendoline* and *The Perils of Gwendoline in the Land of the Yik-Yak*.

HAIRBREADTH HARRY. American syndicated strip created as 'Hairbreadth Harry, the Boy Hero' by C.W. Kahles in 1906, a burlesque of pulps and movie melodramas with a handle-bar moustached villain and a heroine who always required rescuing. Harry starred in six two-reelers around 1925 produced by West Brothers Happiness Comedies.

HARDWARE. The plot was essentially lifted from a short story, 'Shok' by Steve McManus & Kev O'Neill who were credited as the inspiration only after a legal battle. **Hardware** (1990). *Dir/Scr* Richard Stanley. *St* Dylan McDermott, Stacy Travis, John Lynch, Iggy Pop, William Hootkins, Mark Northover. Heavily stylised, very violent movie marking Stanley's debut. McDermott plays a scavenger, Moses, in a post-holocaust world who digs up some old robot parts and gives them to girlfriend Julie (Travis). The sculpture she builds from the parts takes on a life of its own and trashes her flat, and tries to trash her

and the rest of the cast. 95m. *Cert* 18. *V* (edited version 89m).

HAROLD TEEN. American syndicated strip created by Carl Ed in 1919 under the title 'The Love Life of Harold Teen', which effectively described the main thrust of the story. A 1928 silent movie starred Arthur Lake whilst a later talkie (1933) featured Rochelle Hudson.

HOWARD THE DUCK. Steve Gerber created the cynical, hard-talking Howard in 1973 for Marvel comics, and became the centre of a controversy over ownership. **Howard the Duck** (1986). *Dir* Willard Huyck. *Scr* Huyck, Gloria Katz. *St* Lea Thompson, Jeffry Jones, Tim Robbins, Chip Zien, Paul Guilfoyle, Liz Sagal. Executively produced by George Lucas, who disowned it, which just about sums it all up. Cost \$50m and was such a box-office disaster that it was released outside the USA as *Howard - A New Breed of Hero* and advertised so it's not to mention that Howard was a duck, portrayed by a team of midgets and voiced by Zien. The title character is snatched from his homeworld by an out of control laser beam and deposited in back-alley Cleveland, becomes friends with rock chick Beverly (Thompson) with whom he ends up in bed. A lab assistant Bill (Robbins) brings in scientist Jones who attempts to reverse the beam, only to taken over by one of the Dark Overlords of the Universe. He turns into a heat-beam hurling monster, the film turns into an extended chase with explosions and lighting effects. Howard saves the day, but cannot save the film. 110m. *Cert* PG. *[V]*.

Next Month we carry on with The Incredible Hulk and much much more

Reviews

THE COVER IMAGE FOR THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE INVISIBLES (DC/VERTIGO IMPRINT, \$2.95) IS AN UNEXPLODED GRENADE. AS DECLARATIONS OF INTENT GO, IT'S SO DIRECT I CAN'T BELIEVE I HAVEN'T SEEN IT SOMEWHERE BEFORE.



Grant Morrison's story here revolves around Dane, a boy who no-one understands - including himself - and is travelling down a path of rebellion against society, until society catches up with him. With Morrison at the helm, you know nothing's going to stay sane for long, and sure enough the plot is soon enveloped by a surreal conspiracy and John Lennon cameos. The writing of *The Invisibles* reflects a passion for pop culture: those who watch and read too much will start spotting the odd cultural reference where (perhaps) none has been intended. Is Dane's life really supposed to be a pastiche of some 1960s BBC kitchen table drama, or is it just poor writing? Are certain pages designed to make you feel like you've just walked into an episode of 'Third World War' from *Crisis*? The post-modern jumble of ideas is entertaining but achieves little in terms of enlightenment about the characters. Still, it's clear that something major is brewing and - if you'll pardon the inconsistency - *The Invisibles* may be worth keeping an eye on. I'll certainly be interested to see if designer Rian Hughes can recreate the impact of that blistering first cover.

Vertigo's willingness to employ a graphic sensibility that belongs on posters (the conventional thinking goes) rather than comic books indicates that the imprint may be slowly outgrowing its roots - as does the gossip that claims *Vamps* (\$1.95) is selling way better than Vertigo had expected. If it's true that a comic book publisher couldn't see the sales potential of a title featuring vampire biker chicks, it's a first for the medium.

Behind another fine cover (with Brian

Bolland subtly applying body language to create ultimately a lasting image), *Vamps*' third issue builds successfully on its predecessors. Elaine Lee's sassy dialogue means that *Vamps* is consistently entertaining to read, but in many ways it feels like the story is still in an early stage of development, despite this issue marking the halfway stage of the series. There's too much repetitive exposition showing the vampires being vampires to allow the plot to build any momentum.

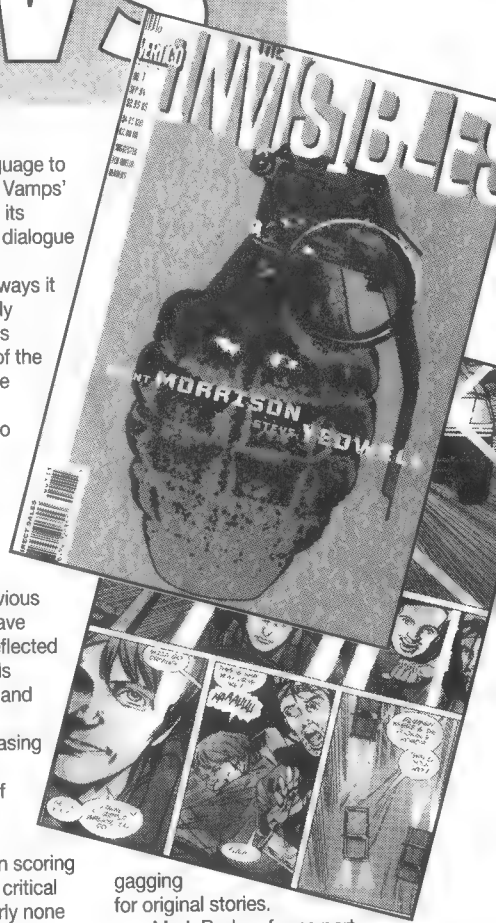
The growing excellence of much of Vertigo's line is part of a tentative, still faltering new trend in comics. Could it be (gasp) that comics are growing up to a more meaningful extent than previous outbreaks of all-grown-upness have indicated? The new maturity is reflected not by a clutch of graphical novels possessed of esoteric wispiqueness and critical fervour - as well as

lousy sales - but by an increasing diversity of choice of story types, sweetened with a healthy dose of no-messing, well-told adult storytelling.

The Legend imprint has been scoring highly in this area - whatever the critical merits of any particular title, clearly none of them is aimed at the teenage X-fan. With names like Miller and Mignola on the line, the Legend manifesto would seem to be 'do stories that reflect the concerns of grown-ups but are still good action yarns'. The work of Paul Chadwick - not previously renowned for its density of fight scenes - might have seemed to be out of place, but *Concrete: Killer Smile #2* (\$2.95) puts paid to that little thought. This latest run of *Concrete* places faithful assistant Larry in a dire position, held captive by a gunman in a pick-up. Chadwick beautifully employs captions and dream sequences to reflect the states of mind of those involved, offering new perspectives on a situation that we've seen in so many bad movies. The fears and machinations of Larry as he tries to get out of the mess he's in makes a compelling story.

The Dark Horse line, of which the Legend imprint is a worthy part, is becoming increasingly adventurous. The company is beginning to smell the opportunities of cross-licensing to film, accepting that in the absence of automatically bankable properties like Batman, a little imagination is needed. Nothing else demonstrates this better than *The Mask*, which has done very nicely for itself this summer as a film, yet started life as a co-creation of Mark Badger - a definite 'least likely to succeed in super-hero comics' - in a black-and-white anthology. Any

traditional publisher would tell you that you just don't put out black-and-white anthologies if you want to show any profit - the fanboys won't touch it. Don't look now, but they just made the money back. There are other people out there,



gagging for original stories.

Mark Badger forms part of the repertory company for new black-and-white anthology *Instant Piano* (Dark Horse, \$3.95), which comes on like a humour comic but isn't that funny - Badger's piece especially is in fact bleak. Laff highlights in the first issue come from Evan Dorkin with a swipe at the fanboy mindset, taking a tired idea to its savagely funny ultimate extent. Kyle Baker's flowing linework also stands out in this stew of styles and ideas. Time will tell whether *Instant Piano* and others mark the end of comics' puberty or if they're just a symptom of hormonal imbalance.

While Marvel has been content this summer to attempt to squeeze the competition by pumping up prices with gimmick formats, and some companies complacently plough out the same super-hero furrow, others are developing lines that may one day mean they can safely ignore what Marvel does. Such diversity, accompanied by a professional determination to create good, well-presented entertainment, is the only way to bring in the significant numbers of new readers that everyone would like to see. Some publishers are sensing the potential gains and are taking some chances to achieve them. Make-your-mind-up time is coming. Do you want a culturally and financially rich industry that releases material whose breadth equals that of any other storytelling medium - or do you want Spider-Man flip books? Take your time now...

Richard Hill

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Small Press



I often find myself wondering at the motivation people feel to produce their own comics. Obviously, the lack of opportunities in the seemingly dwindling UK comics industry is one factor. Many people wouldn't touch a major publisher with a bargepole however, delighting in the freedom that self publishing allows. It is also an ideal medium in which to experiment with new ideas, that would be nigh on impossible to interest a publisher in. It is difficult to say whether the merits or defects of one reason outweigh the others and I regularly see examples that are obviously from each. In the end however, I think it does not matter why someone has gone to the considerable trouble of producing a comic that maybe 200 people will see, it is simply the fact that the urge to do so was so



great that they got it done. That's what attracts me to the small press.

Time We Left has graced these humble pages before, the third issue is out now and it seems to be improving with age. The last issue followed the events leading up to the death of Super-Paul. The first half has a science fiction plot involving mad scientists, aliens and strange experiments, that manages to raise itself above the majority of such plots thanks to Paul's warped sense of humour. The second half features the search for a new

character to replace Paul and is a riotous (literally) profusion of classic comic characters. This is extremely well rendered and will have you reminiscing about all your faves, ranging from K9 to Lucky Luke via Giles, Wonder Woman and many others. Nice one Paul £1.50, and an A5 SAE to P. Hatcher, 16 Dene Close, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 5QP.

Teenage Suicide - what a disappointment! They said the next issue would be called Kurt Suicide and they lied. Well, I guess everyone will have forgotten about that loser by now. The comic however is great! It follows on from last month (cor, what a surprise) and should definitely be picked up as it has two great stories that are just gonna have to be collected. The man behind Teenage Suicide, Richard Smith has also sent me his new comic, Polly Diary Mind, which looked as though it was going to be a fairly interesting biographical type thing about a schoolgirl, until it suddenly blew my socks off. This story is superbly illustrated by Dave Fanning and it truly packs a punch. I don't really want to give away more about the story, so just send off 50p for each comic and an A5 SAE to R. Smith, 35 Devonshire Place, Brighton, BN2 1QB.

Opus One mixes speculative fiction, manga, cyberpunk and fantasy stories in one huge stylistic melee. It works too! The art of Jan Wiacek and Matt Rockman stands out particularly, although there are no slouches in amidst the bunch. I haven't seen anything like Jan's piece attempted in small press before - as the start of a story, there's time to read, but the art speaks for itself. It's a wild mecha romp with intensely stylish robots straight from a manga nightmare. Mates piece is completely different, a tale of rebellious excess and street violence, leading to an inner personal ecstasy (!?). As I say, its all quality stuff as you can find out for £1.20 and an A4 SAE from Mr Hughes, 80 Crowborough Rd, SW17 9QG, or from Forbidden Planet, where almost half of the artists work.

The Incredibly Stupid Adventures Of Fred Fortune is a long title that takes up most of this review! Jonathan Odds draws a mad comic, that relies on cheap gags, slapstick humour, artistic tricks and other things that have always made comics good clean fun. It's like a

futuristic version of The Beano crossed with 2000AD. leS also only £1.00 from J. Qdds clo Little Orchard, Poyle Lane, Burnham, SL1 8JZ - oh yeah, send an A5 SAE too.

Set in Neo Grimsby, Cleaning Services: Special Ops is a story of futuristic rubbish men. They're tough, they're mean, they keep the streets clean and now they're up against a maniac and his organ of destruction. You'll just have to buy the comic to work that out! Artist and writer Neill Cameron is also looking for back-up strips, so check out a copy from 70 Godstow Road, Wolvercote, Oxford, OX2 8NY for £1.00 and an A4 SAE.

Last month I reviewed Beathag by the Runciter Corporation, now it seems that one of the great men has gone solo for a while R For Revenge And Other Stories is the work of Carl Glover and it's a great little bit of fun. His motto is "Stupid is best, fun is good, derision is the reward of they who wear the hat marked 'important' - words to live by. This small collection of his work looks at first sight to be the work of a deranged child, probably one being force fed Ritalin or something. When you get closer however, you'll uncover surprising depth of vision, profound statements about life and the universe and maybe even the meaning of life. On the other hand it could just be a crock of crap - you decide. Carl will be pleased if you send him £1.01 and an A5 SAE to Runciter Corporation, BM Indefinite, London, WC1 N 3XX - you really should.

Leanne Franson is a cartoonist from Canada, who's doing rather well over here. Guest of honour at this years Caption and with a prodigious output of comics, she deserves all the praise she gets. Having produced 25 mini comics in Canada, Steve Marchant at the LCC is helping her collect them, two at a time in special UK editions. There are 7 to collect so far, and I would recommend getting them all. Each one features the continuing story of Liliane the fagless fag hag, acute baby dyke and bisexual cartoonist, plus a varying back up strip. Her story telling is great and anyone who like the work of cartoonists such as Jeremy Dennis, Roberta Gregory and Lee Kennedy is sure to love these touching and humorous stories. Don't delay, buy one today (or preferably seven) from Steve Marchant at the London Cartoon Centre, 14 Conlan Street, London, W10 5AR for £1.00 each and an A5 SAE to fit as many as you are buying.

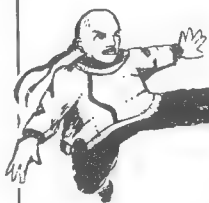
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[Barker, Clive] **Barbieri, Suzanne J. Clive Barker: Mythmaker for the Millenium**. British Fantasy Society, £4.99. Limited edition look into the work of one of Britain's best-selling horror writers, whose talents go way beyond the printed page, into art and film and much darker places. This is now available from the British Fantasy Society, 2 Harwood Street, Stockport SK4 1JJ. Add 50p to cover postage and packing.

Bischoff, David seaQuest DSV: The Ancient. Millenium, £4.99. The Ogata Japanese sea colony is attacked by a leviathan thought to be mythical; as killers gather to destroy the monster, Captain Bridger and crew race against time to save the creature.

Brosnan, John The Opoponax Invasion. Gollancz, £4.99. In a wired-up society, Joster Rack operates against the system, an electronic thief out to pull his most audacious heist yet.

Clarke, Arthur C. The Snows of Olympus. Gollancz, £17.99. Non-fiction study of how Mars could be terraformed from the dead planet seen by Viking into a habitable world. Heavily illustrated with computer enhanced - and evolved - photographs.

Datlow, Ellen Little Deaths. Millenium, £16.99. Anthology of 24 horror stories around the theme of Sex. New stories by Nicholas Royle, Barry Malzberg, M. John Harrison, Joel Lane, K.W. Jeter and Lucius Shepard, plus reprints from Clive Barker and Ruth Rendel.

Dozois, Gardner The Best New SF [8th Annual Collection]. Robinson, £6.99. Easily one of the best anthology series' being published, the best SF of 1993 including stories by Brian Aldiss, Bruce Sterling, Charles Sheffield, Neal Barrett Jr., Joe Haldeman, Dan Simmons and Walter Jon Williams. At 658 pages it's immense value for money and highly recommended.

Eklund, Gordon Star Trek Adventures 8: Devil World. Titan, £3.99. Kirk offers to help a girl find her father, an outlaw who lived with Klingons and has now disappeared on a quarantined planet whose inhabitants look like devils.

Ellery, Derek The Variety Movie Guide 1995. Hamlyn, £14.99 (sc). Huge softcover volume taking in the latest movies - some as yet to be released in the UK even. This offers extensive coverage of over 7,500 titles including an expanded coverage

of classic foreign films. Far more informative than the usual pocket guides, this one we highly recommend, especially if you only dabble in movies on video.

Etchison, Dennis Shadowman. Raven, £4.99. Children are disappearing in the town of Shadow Bay in California at the hands of a Shadowman, a creature of the night with no face.

Gemmell, David Bloodstone. Legend, £15.99 (hc). The latest Jon Shannow blockbuster relates the battle between the Jerusalem Man and the forces of the Deacon, the Jerusalem Riders, who slaughter Unbelievers and Mutants in the name of God and Peace - who worship the memory of Shannow only to suffer his wrath when he returns.

Hooks, Nicky & Sharon Burnett Red Dwarf Quiz Book. Penguin, £4.99. A must for *Red Dwarf* fans but don't imagine you'll answer all the questions. I mean, where did Lister taste his first shami kebab?

Jones, Stephen The Illustrated Frankenstein Movie Guide. Titan, £9.99. Over 400 pocket reviews of every (surely) film with a Frankenstein motif, and that includes cartoons and hardcore. Great book for anyone with an interest in horror, packed with rare illustrations.

Kearney, Paul Riding the Unicorn. Gollancz, £15.99. Third in the series of fantasy novels which began with *The Way to Babylon* and *A Different Kingdom* relating the madness that comes to John Willoby when he begins to hallucinate about a strange, wild fantasy world and unknowingly becomes part of a plot to overthrow a kingdom by bloodshed.

Lawhead, Stephen Pendragon. Lion Publishing, £4.99. Fourth book in the Pendragon 'trilogy' (now a 'cycle') which shows a darker, fiercer history to the legend of Arthur Pendragon. The story is based far closer on Welsh and Irish medieval history of the Celtic warlord. Exceptionally well told from the view of Merlin who taught the young Arthur, it's a far cry from *The Sword in the Stone*.

Lumley, Brian Vampire World 3: Bloodwars. Roc, £5.99. Giant (776 page) conclusion of the Vampire World trilogy wherein two opposing forces of The Gate are ranged against each other, on one side Volmulac Unsleep's undead legions, on the other Wratha the Risen's Renegades. Trapped in the middle is Nathan Keogh, Necroscope.

McCloud, Scott Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art. HarperCollins, £14.99. This is an absolute must-have book for anyone studying comics. McCloud has

Media

already been widely praised everywhere for the book, now available in UK bookshops, and recently picked up an Eisner Award for it. If you don't already have a copy, get one!

McIntee, David A. Doctor Who: First Frontier. Dr Who, £4.99. The Doctor, Ace and Bernice arrive on Earth in time for the space race to hot up in '57. A military threat from space complicates an enjoyable 'aliens amongst us' yarn, full of UFO conspiracy theory and co-starring The Master.

Mann, Philip Stand Alone Stan. Gollancz, £15.99. The second volume of Mann's 'A Land Fit for Heroes' series set in a world where Rome never fell and England is still a green, if unpleasant, land.

Peel, John Doctor Who: Evolution. Dr Who, £4.99. A stylish Missing Adventure for Tom Baker and Sarah Jane who land in Victorian England to discover a giant hound on the Devon moors being sought by ships' doctor Arthur Conan Doyle.

Rucker, Rudy Software. Roc, £4.99. Reprint of 1982 cyberpunk novel which won the first Philip K. Dick Award.

Rusch, Kristine Kathryn Alien Influences. Millenium, £15.99. Rusch has a growing reputation, and her latest book centres on an alien rite-of-passage ritual of dismemberment which is incomprehensible to their human neighbours, but which leads to tragic imitation.

Salisbury, Mark & Alan Hodgcock Behind the Mask. Titan Books, £10.99. Look behind the scenes as special effects wizards create monsters from men. Highly informative look at the art of sfx make up masters for the films *American Werewolf in London*, *Terminator*, *Aliens*, *Jurassic Park* and many others.

Sterling, Bruce Heavy Weather. Millenium, £15.99 (hc). Techno-freaks and scientists use customised computer labs and portable stations to hook into weather fronts through drones and virtual reality - all in search of the ultimate buzz - the F6, a tornado of incredible power. A cyberpunk Point Break from one of the mirrorshade leaders.

Watson, Ian The Fallen Moon. Gollancz, £16.99 (hc). Second (and concluding) Book of Mana. Centuries after the discovery of Kaleva by Lucky Sariola, the half-mad Queen Lucky is seeking out the Ukko - the asteroid-like creature that transported her across space - as are the Isi, who want to enslave humans.

Watson, Ian Lucky's Harvest. Gollancz, £5.99. The First Book of

Mana for which Watson created a realistic and exotic alien world based on the great Finnish saga, the *Kalevala*.

Wright, T.M. Goodlow's Ghost. Gollancz, £4.99. Noirish, funny PI detective story with a supernatural twist, in that he's dead, but isn't sure whether to believe it or not; a sort of bastard son of *Randall & Hopkirk* and Robert Bloch.

GRAPHIC NOVELS

The Mask, by John Arcudi & Doug Mahnke. Titan, £8.99. Reprinted from the now highly collectable original *Mask* mini-series (1991), the collection introduces the Mask, complete with tombstone teeth and maniacal stare and his alter ego Stanley Ipkiss - and to Kathy, who also becomes The Mask, and Inspector Kellaway, who also...you guessed it. This ain't the movie but you can see the germ of every idea you saw on screen in this book except the dog and the Cuban Pete dance. The Mask here is a whole lot more violent and does what anyone with power would do - make a list of people who had made your life hell and trash the bastards! Highly recommended.

The Mask Returns, by John Arcudi & Doug Mahnke. Titan, £7.99. Kathy spends most of the time behind the Mask this time in an unstoppable, pump-action collection of the eponymous 1992 mini-series. Breathlessly frenetic and full of smartass one-liners - but not a Smokin' to be seen.

The Mask: Official Movie Adaptation, by Mike Richardson, Kilian Plunkett & Bruce Patterson. Boxtree, £6.99. Adapting the slightly toned down movie version of Stanley Ipkiss' origin and adventures; includes a couple of scenes not in the film including a brief look at how The Mask got to the USA and the death of reporter Peggy Brandt.

Mr. Punch, by Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean. Gollancz, £8.99. More intense than even *Signal to Noise*, the latest Gaiman/McKean collaboration echoes themes that date back as far as *Violent Cases* using childhood memories and trauma to weave a fable. The book explores the perception of children, how things can seem bigger and darker when we are young, through images of a Punch and Judy show which itself forms part of the seaside backdrop to the narrator's upbringing. I'm unsure

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if we are supposed to feel sympathy for narrator as young boy and the story meanders, touching on events large and small. But mostly small. The art here is very dark and distorted, as slightly off as most mis-remembrances, but in finishing the book I was neither exhilarated or disturbed, just finished. After such a trip I was hoping for something more, and that's something I remember from when I was a kid: the anticipation was sometimes so great the reality didn't quite live up to it. Sadly that's the case here.

Time and Time Again, by loads of people. Titan, £4.99. A slice of enjoyable Superman continuity from 1991 which bounces him back and forth from the 30th century to the time of the dinosaurs. One of the best sequences is set in the 1940s where Clark becomes a circus strongman, although the bulk of the story has Waverider flitting around causing choral chaos.

Wolf in Shadow, by Stan Nicholls & Fangorn. Legend, £9.99. Based on the novel by David Gemmell, this is a handsome looking package, lighter in touch and colour to last year's *Legend*, and more successful in transferring the full novel to 94 pages. Jon Shannow is the Jerusalem Man, almost the Man With No Name in a feudal world of the future. The story roams between western and horror, comfortably mixing wagon trains and cannibalism, demons from the pit and bandits, glowing swords and guns. It's a high body-count exercise, all very manly - women are for protecting and sleeping with - but a more-than-satisfying exhibition for artist Fangorn who retains a muted colour-sense of realism throughout.

Zero Hour, by Dan Jurgens, Jerry Ordway, Frank Fosco & Ken Branch. Titan, £5.99. So this was the event of the summer, no? Not paying attention? This was the crossover that put DC's Universe back in order, and as such involved every superhero from every time period battling to stop themselves being blanked out. These big events need space and the *Zero Hour* issues gathered here were merely a backbone from which to hang the story proper. Too many heroes zip in and out of the story on their way to events told elsewhere and it's a case where the sum of the total individuals doesn't add up to a mega-quality book. Lots of ingredients, but a pretty thin soup. A multiple volume set bringing in the other issues would have been a better read.

FILMS

Chris Columbus will be helming the next Hugh Grant film, **Nine Months**. No news yet when Columbus will begin work on **Fantastic Four** - latest word recently had him working on a **Daredevil** movie before he even thinks about the FF, but the FF project now seems to be back in favour...before donning the **Catwoman** costume, Michelle

Printing is cheap in Japan. Just how cheap you would not believe unless, that is, you were to stand in one of the seven giant halls that comprise the Harumi Convention Centre in Tokyo, and witness with your own eyes the proof that is called Comiket. Held twice a year, in winter and summer, Comiket (simply Comic Market) is the gathering place for thousands of circles, (fan groups) and the hundreds of thousands who flock there to buy their lavishly printed Dojinshi. The word means "other person comics" since these frequently feature interpretations, sequels, prequels and flights of fancy based on favourite characters,



anime and manga from the mainstream Japanese media.

No amount of statistics can prepare you for the reality of Comiket. Can you imagine 150,000 people buying and selling comics in one swelteringly hot location? The figure by the way is for one day! Comiket is held over two! Girls (shojo) manga is sold on the first, and boys (shonen) on the second, though you don't have to be a girl to sell shojo, (or vice-versa) and nor does your gender disqualify you from attending on any day you like. Nor is there an entrance fee charged; it is a matter of some considerable pride to the Comiket staff that they are a non-profit making concern, unaffiliated in any way to the professional scene. Expenses are recouped from selling table space



to circles, of which there are an awful lot, as a glance at the Comiket catalogue will confirm.

Picture a book the size and weight of a squat telephone directory, over 700 pages in length, each page crammed with approximately 35 tiny illustrations, each illustration representing the work of a circle. These are then grouped into

categories, such as SF, romance and fantasy, and finally this prodigious repository of

knowledge is subdivided into two, to distinguish between boys and girls manga. With this tome in hand, it is perfectly feasible to locate any table on any given day, in any one of the seven halls, with a degree of accuracy that leaves you in awe of the organisational abilities of the Comiket staff. These number roughly 1300 volunteers who on the day itself act as door staff, medics, (a record breaking 2000 fainting cases were reported over the two days) and marshals, a pitifully small number of whom appear charged with directing the immense crowds. However, the fans are incredibly well disciplined, though it is easy to imagine even the traditional Japanese sobriety

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cracking under the circumstances.

One caveat to anyone contemplating a visit to Comiket is the line to get in. To call this a human river is an apt metaphor, since it is roughly ten persons wide and snakes back and forth across the Convention Centre parking lot for what seems like miles, and probably is. People start queuing (despite requests not to) the previous night, but those turning up on the day can face a minimum two hour wait for admittance.

The opening of dealing provided one of the biggest surprises of the day. I had quickly reached the conclusion that certain circles were expecting a good day,



Pfeiffer plays a real-life undercover cop Heidi Landgraf in **The Ice Queen**, but only after she's had her baby and maybe starred in **Higgins and Beech**, a war/love story with Richard Gere which seems to be back on track again...Harrison Ford will shoot **Sabrina**, a remake of the 1954 Billy Wilder comedy with Humphrey Bogart & Audrey Hepburn, before shooting the 4th **Indiana Jones** film next summer...Ridley Scott's latest, **Crisis in the Hot Zone** has suffered a set back with Jodie Foster quitting when Robert Redford's part was re-written - and still he quit - and the film now seems to have imploded...Ridley's last job was directing Gerard Depardieu, of course - in a French tv advert for Barilla spaghetti...Depardieu may be playing Obelix in a live action **Asterix** movie to be directed by Claud

Berri...Comic fan Sam Raimi is to direct **Frosty the Snowman** for Warner Bros...and Joanne Whalley-Kilmer is currently attached to a film called **Batman in the Rain**, a 1960s drama which will probably have to be retitled!...and Sharon Stone, who stars alongside Sylvester Stallone in **The Specialist**, has written 15 short stories for a collection entitled *Thank You For Being There*. We reserve judgement on whether she's just a pretty face or not until we've read the book...

Filming on the next Bond movie, **Goldeneye**, has been delayed by 'script problems', although it could easily be a simple lack of space at either Shepperton or Pinewood, the only two studios large enough to fit the expansive sets. Pinewood's Bond Stage is currently home for **Mary Reilly**, starring Julia Roberts...And

some interesting developments at Fox who are currently developing a script for **Alien 4** pushing **Aliens vs Predator** onto the back burner...with James Cameron directing? At the moment that's in the realms of bored copywriters...

And talking of trouble, next years' spate of pirate movies - **Cutthroat Island** and **Mistress of the Seas** - are both in stormy water: the latter was canned by Columbia, but now seems back on course without Paul Verhoeven at the helm. John Milius is rewriting the script for director Jean-Jacques Annaud; meanwhile Michael Douglas has quit Renny (Cliffhanger) Harlin's movie starring wife Geena Davis, and nobody wants the role...

Four Weddings and a Funeral recently strolled past *Ghost* and *Mrs Doubtfire* to become the second

since some were sitting on what must have amounted to thousands of neatly boxed copies, but had not envisaged that any would enjoy the sort of adulation on display. Within an hour, lines were stretching out of the main building



and were beginning to double back on themselves, but these popular circles had come prepared, and in what was surely the most unenviable job of the day (temperatures for Tokyo that weekend were the highest on record) a representative of each

table was on hand with a large placard, so as to steer their fans towards the end of the correct line.

OK you say, never mind the quantity, what about the quality? Unless you actually hold a Dojinshi in your hands, you cannot really appreciate the obvious love and attention which goes into these comics, but let me try and give you a flavour. They usually run to about 50 black and white pages and though they come in all shapes and sizes, the majority



adhere to a format of roughly 18 by 25 centimetres. Remember I said printing is cheap in Japan? Well envisage this. A dojinshi in the above format, perfect bound, with full wrap around colour cover and a gorgeous four page colour centre-spread! Yes, believe it or not, colour covers are the norm, and that's not all. Every kind of paper and printing process known to man is utilised.

Dust jackets, wax paper lead-in sheets, and embossing all feature in the most imaginative ways, and I have not yet begun to describe the art. This is of a standard to set the pulse racing, and more than compensates for any inability you might have to actually read the stories, though if the writing is in any way comparable, then these must rate better than most professional manga. Not surprising as deadlines frequently impinge harshly upon quality in the high pressure world of professional manga illustration.

So how much do you pay for a Dojinshi? Well, the average seemed to be about 600 to 700 yen each (about \$4.00 at today's rate) which on a purely pennies per page ratio is not nearly as good value as a traditional manga, however for the chance to own such unique treasures, I consider this to be a bargain. Certainly the Japanese seem to agree with this sentiment, buying in such bulk that several freight companies were on hand to ship their booty home.

If you are now inspired to attend a Comiket, the next is scheduled for December 29th and 30th. Comiket welcomes foreign visitors, and I strongly advise that you contact them before travelling. They have english speaking staff for this purpose, and will do their best to ensure you have a memorable time.

Further information on Comiket can be obtained from Yoshitaka Ishigami, Department of International Publicity, Comic Market, 24-10, 3-chome, Gein, Mino-Shi, Osaka 562, Japan. Tel/Fax: (81) 727-29-9654. E-mail: 74110.223@compuserve.co.uk.



biggest grosser in British cinema history at a staggering £26m, but still has a way to go to pass *Jurassic Park's* £47m...but not all films have been a rip-roaring success this summer, the notable dog in the manger being Kevin Costner's *Wyatt Earp* which cost \$35m and has only taken \$24.8m, bad news for Costner as he's currently involved in (rumoured) spiralling cost problems and delays with his latest film, *Waterworld* (all strongly denied by Universal, of course)...

News so hot it didn't reach our Production Hell column this issue, *GrimJack*, the character created by John Ostrander and Timothy Truman nearly a decade ago, is in development as a movie. Classics International Entertainment (owners of the American Moondogs chain)

and Rattlenake Productions (who produce *Deep Space Nine*) have entered into an agreement to form a corporation to produce the movie which will be scripted by Joe Straczynski, the creator of *Babylon 5*.

VIDEO

Good news for video censorship watchers: *Beyond Bedlam* will be released in December with an 18 certificate with only two slight cuts...and if you want to check out Lori Petty before her appearance in *Tank Girl* you could do a lot worse than pick up *Free Willy* on Warner's Family Entertainment label - you can also play spot the animatronic killer

whale at the same time! Seriously, it's just what the label says it is...on November 25 Jim Carrey's surprise smash *Ace Ventura, Pet Detective* comes to rental shops from Warner, and great fun it was too...and while we're on stars of comic related films, you can see Brenda Bakke (from *Gunhed*) in Fox Video's *Hot Shots Part Deux*, which is one of the best parody films since the original *Airplane* sequence... *Superman II* is released as a £6.99 Screen Classic on November 7 starring Christopher Reeve as Supes. Not quite up to the standard of the original, but still great entertainment...the *Star Wars* remastered editions looked pretty much the same to me when shown in Taylor-vision, but get the tapes

on a decent tv and video and you can really see a difference in both the sharpness in picture and colour quality.

Badmad: From Comics to Screen (1989). *Dir* James Gordon. Two tv *Batmania* specials on one tape reviewing the history of Batman...and what a weird ride it is, from shots of the early comic books, through the 1940s Columbia serials and then concentrating on the 1960s tv production. Adam West comes over as the star of the show, reprising his role as Batman at rare convention footage, intentionally hilarious; the show also includes trailers to the three series and the movie, snippets from movies by various actors (e.g. Alan 'Alfred' Napier in an early Sherlock Holmes pilot) and behind the scenes at various Batman reunions. The second show is virtually a rerun of the first with much of the same footage, plus an extended look at *The Green Hornet* show (which co-starred Bruce Lee); towards the end we get to flick through a magazine special of the Batman movie as the tv compilation obviously wasn't given the budget to screen clips, adding another hilarious twist to the show. Bat-mad indeed. 85m. Merlin MER 1007.

ANIME

Bubblegum Crisis 1-4 (1987-88). *Dir* Katsuhiro Akiyama (1-3), Hiroki Hayashi (4). Lower price re-release of the anime cyberbikes 'n' babes classic: set in future Tokyo, the Knight Sabers are a vigilante-group-for-hire, a four girl team in ultra-modern battlesuits. Ranged against them is the mega-corporation Genec and their cyborg Boomers and the AD Police. The soundtrack is a rock classic in its own right. 53/30/30/40m. Anime Projects APO92-001-4. Cert PG. Subtitled.

Cybercity Oedo 808 File 1: Virtual Death (1990). *Dir* Yoshiaki Kawajiri. From the opening shots of a maximum security orbital prison all the way down to the falling cherry blossom, you've seen all the tricks before, but this is a nicely-paced profanity-strewn action film set in the 29th century. Sengoku, Benten and Gogul are three cyberpunk murderers working off their prison sentences by doing the dirty work the cops don't want to handle, kept under control by explosive collar. In this case, Oedo's highest skyscraper is cut off from the outside world and, after dodging lasers and security droids, Sengoku discovers Dave Kurokawa, one of the original constructors on the building had murdered his partner 15 years before - and the dead man wants revenge. You could imagine Rutger Hauer taking the lead in a straight-to-video live action version. 42m. Manga MANV 1049. Cert 15.

Devilman: The Devil Bird (1990). *Dir* Tsutomu Iida. Straight into the demonic action as Akira (aka Devilman) receives a phonecall from a drain, races across the city in a way

MULTIMEDIA
CONTINUED

that would make Peter Parker proud and heads for the sewers to face Jimmen, a demonic turtle with a shell of living human remains. Then off to face a water demon attacking his girlfriend at home, and finally Shirenu, the naked Demon (Star) Bird. The plot is as daft as that, but there are some compensatory moments, notably the choreography of the 20 minute battle between D'Man and Shirenu which begins as a semi-erotic dance and becomes increasingly more violent, incorporating some terrific perspective shots along the way. 57m. Manga MANV 1057. Cert 18.

The Guyver - Data 7: The Battle Begins (1992). *Dir* Masahiro Otani & Naoto Hashimoto. A new era for The Guyver as Act 2 opens with the same driving metal beat and a similar in-your-face action style. Picking up where the last series ended, the Chronos Corporation now have a new head in Dr. Balkus planning to destroy the Guyver through his friends and family. Fumio Fukamachi is killed by an explosion and his son, Sho (Guyver 1) grieves. Agito Makashima (Guyver 3) promises the demise of the many-branched Chronos from the inside, but seems to have his own agenda, and a newcomer arrives in the shape of reporter-Murakami and his Zoanoid blasting gun. Saving the kidnapped Tetsuro and the beleaguered Guyver 1, Murakami reveals that Sho's girlfriend, Mizuky, and father Fumio are alive...but that's another chapter. 26m. Manga MANV 1044. Cert PG.

Moldiver Vols 1 & 2. *Dir* Hiroyuki Kitazame. Scoring high on laughs, *Moldiver* is a 21st century superhero action/comedy/romance. Hiroshi Ozora has created a suit that can protect its wearer from energy and shock: he becomes the superhero Captain Tokyo to fight crime. His younger sister, Mirai, finds out about the suit and adjusts it slightly: she thinks a superhero should be able to make a fashion statement. The story develops through the machinations of the mad Dr Machinegul, on the surface the saviour of Tokyo but actually behind much of the damage it sustains in the course of the series. Each tape contains two episodes of this well developed series, with two more episodes still to come. 60/60m. Pioneer PIO10003-4. Cert PG.

Starblazers: The Quest for Iscandar (1974). *Dir* Yoshinobu Nishizaki. First of a six-part series collecting episodes of the successful *Uchu Senkan Yamato* (Space Cruiser Yamamoto) tv series. The Earth has been bombarded by Gamilon bombs and turned into a radioactive wasteland. Even dwelling underground will only give humanity one more year to live and all seems lost when the last Space Cruiser Argo limps back to Earth. But a message from Iscandar, 148,000 light years distant, from Queen Starsha brings together a crew for a refitted battleship, the Yamata, and a desperate mission to bring back Cosmo-DNA, a device which removes

radioactivity. Now looking incredibly dated, here's a chance to see the influential series which, and daft tho' it is, it still has a certain masochistic appeal. 98m. Kiseki KIS 93027. Cert U.

Tenchi Muyo Vols 1 & 2 (1992). *Dir* Hiroki Hayashi. Already a word-of-mouth hit with Otaku, Tenchi Muyo (No need for Tenchi, or Good for nothing Tenchi) is really an amalgam of all the best bits from previous hits, with put-upon schoolkid hero Tenchi surrounded by a plethora of dizzy aliens. "Don't go into the shrine and wake up the demon," says Tenchi's grandfather so...guess what? That's just what he does, awakening the green-haired, cute but vain Ryoko, who was pursued to Earth centuries before by one of Tenchi's ancestors, Yoshio. He defeats her, but returns her power when he thinks he's under attack from an evil demon - actually Yoshio's fiancée, mauve haired Ayeka, and her little sister, Sasami. The whole exercise seems to be to surround Tenchi with an ever-growing cast of cute giggling girls but its pleasant enough and clearly not aimed at hardcore cyberpunk/demon anime fans. For anyone else it's a nice change of pace. 60/60m. Pioneer PIO10001-2. Cert PG.

Urusei Yatsura Movie 4: Lum the Forever (1986). *Dir* Yamazaki Kazuo. Intriguingly odd, frustratingly confusing, *Movie 4* has the intensity of a dream, moving from scene to scene with little reference to what has gone before. It seems to begin with an electrical blackout, or perhaps with the making of a movie - or maybe with the cutting down of an ancient cherry tree or when Lum receives a crack on the head. From which moment Lum begins to lose her powers and for what reason? Is she a virus in the group memory of Tomobiki Town's inhabitants. At the end I was fully expecting her to wake up from concussion, but she didn't. Some great moments, but uncomfortably long and not the best initiation to Lum for beginners. I will have to say "for fans only". 94m. Anime Projects APO94-009. Cert PG. Subtitled.

Urusei Yatsura Movie 5: The Final Chapter (1988). *Dir* Dezaki Tetsu. Don't let the above put you off! Lum is back in fine form here. Lum leaves Earth to meet her grandfather who, unbeknownst to the family, had once promised his daughters hand in marriage to a stranger; well, Lum's the first female born to the family in years and the stranger's back to claim her for his grandson. Kidnapped, Lum doesn't particularly want to marry Rupa; on her trail, Ataru doesn't particularly want her back. A wild comedy of manners with the whole cast in great form - and an additional wildcard in the shape of Miss Carla, a gun-toting cutie who won't let anyway stand in her path to true love. 85m. Anime Projects APO94-010. Cert PG. Subtitled.

ANIMATION

The **WildC.A.T.s** animated series which was due to start on September

17 on CBS in the USA was delayed until October 1. According to creator Jim Lee, who also executively produces the show, it was because "We want better production." I wonder if we'll ever see it on British terrestrial tv?

Meanwhile, Rob Liefeld - being counter-sued by Roustabout after twice failing to regain material relating to the failed **Youngblood** which they produced on his behalf - is touting around a joint project with Eric Larsen, the **Image Action Hour**...and elsewhere at Image, Sam Keith is developing a **Maxx** animated series for MTV to be part of an anthology called *The Head*, with Maxx scripter William Messner-Loebs acting as consultant and a **Spawn** animated series is in development for cable, which means it won't fall under the usual network scrutiny for violence.

After the disaster that was **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III**, the next movie may be animated...

Batman: Mask of the Phantasm (1993). *Dir* Eric Radomski & Bruce W. Timm. We previewed this animated film back in #25; sadly it then seemed to vanish. Now it's available on retail video and although it'll never know the aural grandeur of the full theatrical showing at your local cinema it does transfer to the small screen well. The beauty of the film is that it hasn't taken any easy routes: it has a complex storyline which introduces Bruce's first love, Andrea Beaumont, to whom he was engaged in his college days, and tackles Bruce's feelings about his parents' deaths and his first attempts at crimefighting. It's not the tv series or Tim Burton's vision - the animated series struck out and found its own voice. Batman here is as stylised as hell with a heroic jaw and the action is kept mostly to the rooftops and faces of Gotham's magnificent facades. It's Batman as he should be. The vocal actors include Kevin Conroy, Dana Delany and Mark Hamill as a maniacal Joker. Now if only we were allowed the pleasure of the tv series... 73m. Warner SO15500. Cert PG.



Much speculation had been going on over the identity of the Captain in the latest *Star Trek* spin-off series, *Voyages*. It seemed everything was cut and dried when Genevieve Bujold was announced to play Captain Elizabeth Janeway. But only a few days into shooting the new series, Bujold has quit, being overheard to say on the set that she hadn't trained as an actress to play a cartoon character, although the official reason for her leaving, according to Paramount, is that "The rigours of episodic television were too demanding". She has been replaced

by an unknown American actress, the 35-year-old Kate Mulgrew.

TRADING CARDS

Classic Games Inc. have an 80-card **Mortal Kombat II** series available now with seven limited edition insert sets. From the example we've seen it looks like the images are screen grabs, taken from the game itself, which should be popular enough considering the success of the game.

Hot on the heels of the summer *Akira* set, Cornerstone have an 81 card **Robot Carnival** set for release in October. The film was based on the work of nine top Japanese creators which gives the cards some nice variation

Skybox have announced six **Star Trek** cinema-based 72-card sets to be shipped in November. Each set related to one of the six *Trek* movies, and are based on scenes from the actual movies. Add to that the December release of a set based on **Generations** and the **Star Trek 1994** 100-card set which also features New Generation and *Deep Space Nine* images, and the Final Frontier somehow doesn't seem so far away any more...

MAGAZINES

Battleground #6 (Sep 1994). Last in this format before it switches to small press coverage only - a shame as I've enjoyed the diversity of articles in recent issues. Certainly the best fanzine about - I can't imagine that changing even if the direction changes - and deserving your support in any incarnation. Single issue £1.75 post paid, or 3-issue subscription for a fiver. Cheques payable to Andy Brewer at 58 Kingsley Court, Aylesbury Close, Salford M5 4EZ.

LCC News #2 (Sep 1994). Chatty newszine relating matters of interest to friends, graduates and attendees of the London Cartoon Centre. There's some nice background stuff here for artists yet to break through, and a gossip column, too. Available from Jackie Pruskin at 30 Sheffield Terrace, London W8 7NA for 60p + a stamped A4 envelope.

EVENTS
MARTS

until Dec 9. **MIRTH OF A NATION**, National Museum of Cartoon Art, 183 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1DD. Exhibition of The Cartoon Art Trust Collection. Information: 071 388 4326. 22 Oct **Manchester**. Sachas Hotel, Tibb Street, Piccadilly. 23 Oct **Leicester**. YMCA, Granby Street. 23 Oct **London**. Wembley Exhibition Centre. Pop Culture Memorabilia Fair.

Special Guests: Lady Penelope, Parker and the FAB1 Rolls.

23 Oct **St Albans**. Francis Bacon School, Drakes Drive.

29 Oct **Cardiff**. The Angel Hotel, Westgate Street. Special Guests: Mike Collins & David Roach.

29 Oct **Hull**. Valiant House Hotel, Anlaby Road.

30 Oct **London**. Camden Centre, Kings Cross.

5 Nov **Leeds**. Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merion Way.

6 Nov **Milton Keynes**. Woughton Leisure Centre, Rainbow Drive, Leadenhall.

11-14 Nov **CULT TV WEEKEND**, Pontin's Seacroft Holiday Village, Hensby, Norfolk. Special Guests: Carolyn Seymour, Harlan Ellison, Jon Pertwee, Sylvia Anderson, Barry Morse, Sophie Aldred, Deborah Watling, etc. £35 advance registration (by 7 November) or £40 on door. Information: Cult TV, PO Box 1701, Peterborough, PE1 1EX.

12 Nov **GAMESCON '94**, TownGate Theatre, Park Mead, Basildon. All forms of role-play, board games, Magic the Gathering, D&D, etc. Opens 9.30am, admission 50p. Information: Jim on 0268 531 343.

12 Nov **Glasgow**. Glasgow City Halls.

12 Nov **Newcastle**. University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road.

13 Nov **Basildon**. Sports Centre, Nethermayene. Comic, Card, SF Fair.

19 Nov Bristol. New Trinity Community Centre, Trinity Road,

St Philips.

19 Nov **Glasgow**. Mitchell Theatre.

Comic, Card, Memorabilia Fair.

19 Nov **Liverpool**. Bluecoat Concert Hall. Special Guests: Bryan Talbot & Ben Hunt.

19 Nov **Sheffield**. Main Hall, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street.

20 Nov **London**. Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, WC1. Comic, Card, SF, Film Mart.

26 Nov **London**. Central Club, 16-22 Great Russell Street WC1. Comic, Card, SF Fair.

26 Nov **Manchester**. Sachas Hotel, Tibb Street, Piccadilly.

27 Nov **Liverpool**. Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street.

3 Dec **Cardiff**. The Angel Hotel, Westgate Street.

3 Dec **Leeds**. Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merion Way.

11 Dec **London**. TUC Congress Centre, 23-28 Great Russell Street, WC1.

10 Dec **Nottingham**. Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street.

17 Dec **Birmingham**. Carrs Lane Church Centre.

17 Dec **London**. Central Club, 16-22 Great Russell Street WC1. Comic, Card, SF Fair.

Multi Media was brought to you in a white heat of panic to complete all the reviews before UKCAC. The men who think sleep is for wimps are Neil Cooper (graphic novels), Dave McLoughlin (books), Pete Taylor (films & vids) and Steve Holland (bits of everything).

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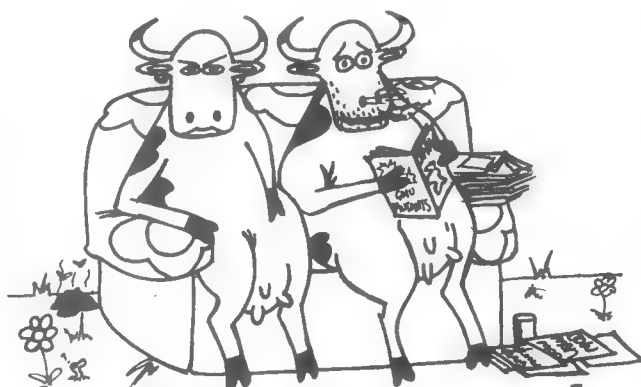


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M.	Mint Perfect
N.M.	Nearly Mint
V.F./V.F.N.	Very Fine
F.N.	Fine
V.G.	Very Good
G.	Good
F.	Fair
P.	Poor
B.S.	Bookshop Stamp on Cover
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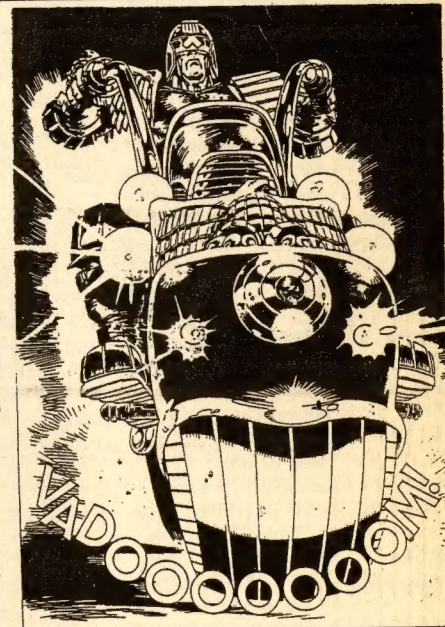
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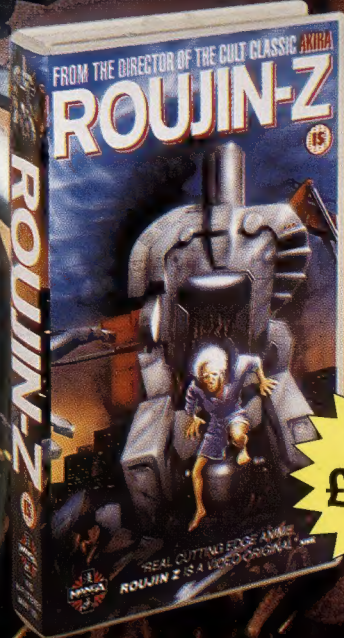
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